



COTE: Last Elite Standing

Lumi-chan!

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Episode 0:

Tap here to start writing

Ayanokoji PoV

Initially, I came to this school, fully expecting to live a normal life.

*I wanted to discover the type of person I am,,,,the type of person I should've been....if it weren't for **that place**.*

For a while, this school was lenient to its students and I was given the privilege of living like a normal high school student for three years....

Unfortunately, that privilege got cut down to one month.....

The moment the curtains lifted....

All the students began to realize something....

This school isn't paradise...

This school....

is.....

Hell....

" Ayanokoji-kun.....you betrayed us?"

" This guy...."

" He's a monster...."

" TRAITOR!"

I paid no heed to their words. What I decided to do can never be undone.

"Ayanokoji-kun..." A familiar voice called out to me.

It was a fellow classmate, a girl with long black hair, gradient red eyes, with a white braid tied to the side. I looked to the girl in silence, I wondered about the strange expression she was wearing. She looked troubled but had the air of a certain resolve....

She kneels on the ground, facing me.

" H-Huh? Why is Horikita-san kneeling?!"

" W-Was she working with him the entire time?!"

" Does that make her a traitor too?"

" No, Suzune what are you doing! Don't kneel to this bastard! " A tall boy with red hair and an athletic build was about to stomp towards us both but his friends quickly held him back.

" What are you doing, Horikita?" I asked her nonchalantly.

Her lips were quivering, her hands trembled, but her eyes still showed resolve.

" Ayanokoji-kun.....no matter what they say.....I...." She slowly bent her entire body towards the ground until her head made contact with the floor. She completely submitted to me.

" I'll follow you....I'll do whatever you wish but please.....please help me in return!" she yelled her plea.

Our classmates gasped in shock at her words, in a few minutes, she'll end up in my position. By submitting to me, she had thrown away her safety lock and now the class will deem her as an outcast along with me.

It wasn't too much of a surprise. A weak individual such as herself, who is incapable of doing anything, will come to see me as her only hope for her certain goal. In her eyes, at this very moment, I decide whether or not she lives or dies.

Horikita Suzune, a fellow classmate, has resigned her title as a human being....

And accepted the title of becoming my **tool**.

CHAPTER END!

Welcome to this new fic!

I wanted to try writing a plot that focused on class battles and (hopefully) big brain schemes pulled off by our characters.

This fic will be my hardest one to update due to the amount of thinking I must endure so that everything that happened before and happens after will make sense!

Next chapter will be the calm before the storm.

KawaiiLumine, out~

Episode 1: Hell under the guise of 'Paradise'.

Ayanokoji PoV

Tokyo Metropolitan Advanced Nurturing High school.

I'm a student of that school. A completely normal high school student.

Well, I'd like to think so at least...

After all....

I sighed to myself as I leaned my head towards my palms.

" I still haven't made any friends...." I groaned to myself.

Aren't high school students supposed to make friends? Even just one would be all right. The problem is that while I'm well aware that having a friend or two could get me through the upcoming school years....

I had no idea how to make friends...

" Are you still grieving over the fact that you have zero acquaintances?" A girl's voice interrupted my mental suffering. I looked over to the seat beside me and felt like rolling my eyes at the sight of her.

" Morning to you too, Horikita..." I decided to greet her anyways.

I hear her chair screech. She must have ignored my greeting and opted to sit down and read her book as usual. Well, I shouldn't bother her then....

" Nice weather today, huh." I retract my promise of not bothering her instantaneously.

" A terrible conversation starter. " She remarked.

" Ouch....you're well aware that I'm trying my best, right?"

" Try your best somewhere else. I hate being bothered by you."

" Aren't we-"

" We're not friends." She already predicted what I was about to say.

I mentally sighed. She's right though, why am I bothering her about friendship when I can try to look for someone else who can possibly reciprocate my bland offer of companionship. Perhaps I tried to win over Horikita out of pure desperation due to my loner status that I was suddenly titled with by the girls in our class.

Well, maybe I should take Horikita's words seriously and go bother someone else (though I very much hope that I'm not actually a bother to them) and pray that they're willing to reciprocate my friendship.

Ah, but class is starting soon so I'd better save it for lunch.

(Lunch time...)

All right, time to try and ask someone if they'd like to have lunch with me.

You can do this, Kiyotaka. It's not that hard.

I got up from my seat and headed out the classroom. Suddenly, as I made a right turn, I almost bumped into a girl.

" Sorry." I apologized even though I didn't make any sort of contact with her, she still looked surprised.

" Oh, Ayanokoji-kun! I've been waiting for you." The girl said. Come to think of it....doesn't she look familiar?

Wait, did she just say my name?

" Uh.....hi?" I awkwardly greeted.

" Why are you acting as if you don't know me? It's me, Kushida Kikyo! I'm your classmate!" she pouted.

Oh, right. She's the girl that wanted to dedicate her year into making many friends, she'd already attracted the hearts of the boys in our class and I'm quite certain that she also attracted the hearts of other outside of our class.

" Oh, um, sorry about that. My mind blanked out for a second when you called me by my name. " I said, honestly.

" Hm? Why?" She tilts her head curiously. Wow, she really is cute... I can see why the boys like Ike Kanji are willing to do anything to appeal to her.

" Well....nobody really talks to me. But today I was planning to change that." I told her.

" Eh? That's great!" She seemed proud of my decision. It made me feel slightly motivated than before if I were to be honest.

Is it normal for me to feel like I could do anything just because I was complimented by a beautiful girl like her?

" Ah, thanks. I haven't really talked to anyone yet though..."

" Are you saying I don't count as ' anyone', Ayanokoji-kun?" She gasps, " how mean~!" Oh, she was teasing me.

" No I didn't mean that. I was initially planning to socialize outside of my class but putting that aside," I quickly switched the topic. " Why were you waiting for me?"

" Well, do you remember when I said I wanted to get along with everyone in class? "

" No, I hardly paid attention to the introductions."

" Eh?" She was suprised by my blunt response and began giggling,
" You're actually quite funny, Ayanokoji-kun! haha!"

But...I wasn't joking...

I was too focused on practicing my own introduction that I completely zoned out everyone else's introductions.

I regret doing so, because now I hardly know anyone's names or basic information. Perhaps I do actually deserve the title of ' loner' for zoning into my own little world at the wrong time...

" haha....anyways, " Once she composed herself, she smiled at me and showed me her contacts list. " Do you mind putting in your number? I vowed to myself that I'll get along with everyone and that includes you, Mr. Loner!"

A girl is asking for my contact number....

A beautiful one at that...

" Ayanokoji-kun? Earth to Ayanokoji-kun...." She waved her hands in front of my face and I quickly snapped out of my trance.

" Oh, uh, sure." I quickly agreed and inputted my number into her phone. She smiles at me and also gives me her contact number.

I successfully exchanged contact numbers with someone...

Ah, this feeling of success....perhaps I can live through my 3 years at this school with Kushida's number by my side....

That's a joke. Whoever is reading my thoughts, please take whatever I say with a grain of salt.

" Oh! By the way, are you close friends with Horikita-san? I often see you talk to each other and it's quite suprising since Horikita-san often ignores my attempts of doing the same..." Kushida asked.

Yep, sounds like a Horikita thing to do...

" Oh, is that so? Well....Horikita and I aren't exactly friends per say. We just talk to each other at times but she often shuts me down pretty quickly. So I suggest giving up on her-"

" Could you help me get along with her? I really wanna be friends with her!" She pleaded with cute eyes.

It's like looking into the eyes of a puppy.....geez....

"Sorry, I won't be much use in persuading a girl like her." Or any girl for that matter...

" Oh..." She looks sullen for a bit and it almost made me feel guilty until her face lights up with positivity again. How in the world does she do that?

" Nevermind, it's okay, Ayanokoji-kun! Perhaps I should try to stay persistent and then maybe she'll give in." She said.

" Good luck then..." I meant it.

" Thank you! And it was nice talking to you for the first time, Ayanokoji-kun! See ya!" She waves goodbye and leaves me be.

I clenched my fist in victory.

I talked to a girl...

(After school....)

" Pallet cafe.....a hive of women is what awaits any non-woman who enters..." I muttered as I stared at said cafe.

This is truly a place that can frighten any man and develop anxiety if they try and enter this place alone. No, even if they bring back-up.....they probably wouldn't 30 minutes without giving up due to the judgemental stares and the amount of girls who comes here daily to talk with their girl friends.

but I, Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, will not give up. I heard that the cafe was currently selling some very fancy ice cream, and since I have more than enough points to afford it, I have absolutely no reason to give up!

I took a step towards the door.

Keep moving forward...

I opened the door....

I took one small step in the cafe...

And eyes were instantly on me.

I froze and I quickly took a step out and backed away.

That was nerve-wracking.....why did they all simultaneously stare at me the moment I took one single step inside? And then judge me with their eyes in a millisecond?!

Girls are truly intimidating creatures when they come in groups....

I sighed. " Perhaps there's no hope for me..." I sadly muttered once I thought about being unable to buy the fancy ice cream due to my own social issues....

" Hm? Are you okay over there?" A girl interrupted my mourning. I quickly looked at her and then straightened my back.

" Uh.....yeah...." I said.

" Are you having trouble with entering the cafe?" She asked.

How could she tell? Wait, did she watch me wallowing in self-agony from the distance a few minutes ago?

If that's the case, then I wish to be buried 6 ft under....

"No. Why would you think that...." I said in a not so convincing tone that she could probably call out my bullshit on.

I was then suddenly suprised when her lips formed into a smile and that's when I realized that it was ANOTHER beautiful girl that was currently talking to me, this time she has strawberry blonde hair and blue with quite.....generous proportions.

" Hey, I was going to go order a drink from the cafe. Wanna come along?" She asked.

Huh? Did she deliberately chose to not further elaborate on why I was wallowing in self-agony outside of the cafe, rather, she chose to smoothly invite me into going inside with her as to not arouse suspicions from other girls?

Or am I overthinking things...

" Uh sure." I decided to accept her invitation anyways. I'm sure she has no ulterior motives with a guy like me...

" Oh, so that's what you wanted to order, huh?" She comments as we exited the cafe after successfully ordering what we wanted. We'd told our orders to different cashiers.

" Yeah." I said before shoving a spoonful of the delicious looking ice cream in my mouth.

Oh....this is truly a wonder of the world....

The girl beside me giggles and I quickly snapped out of my trance and asked her if there was something funny. She waves away my concerns.

" Don't worry, it's just a suprise to see you look so happy when you've been wearing a blank expression prior to that ice cream. You look suprisingly adorable." She smiles sweetly.

"....Adorable?" Did I just get complimented by a girl?

Why do I feel like this single comment is enough for me to live on for the next 60 years in bliss....

Is it normal for people to feel that way?

" Adorable, huh..." I averted my gaze towards my ice cream. " That's a first for me to hear in all honesty...."

" Well, I'm glad I was the one who said it first~" She laughs.

She's so charismatic...

"...What's your name? I don't quite recall..." I asked her.

She stops laughing and wore a look of sudden realization immediately after.

" O-Oh, right!!! I forgot to introduce myself to you. My name is Ichinose Honami, from Class B. " She lends me a hand to shake. " Nice to meet you."

" Ayanokoji Kiyotaka. Class D." I said, curtly, before taking her hand and shaking it a little.

" Pleasure to meet you."

" By the way. what did *you* order?" I asked, curiously as I looked over the small dessert box she was holding.

She happily begins opening the box and giving me a little peek.

Cupcakes huh....

" Cupcakes!" She said.

" It looks delicious, Ichinose." I said.

" Would you like to have one?"

" Nah, I'm good." I assured her before lifting my ice cream. " I already have this, after all."

" Ah, that's right. " She nods before checking the time and she quickly began waving good bye.

" I gotta go, Ayanokoji-kun! See you around!" She said in a hurry before running away with her dessert box.

I doubt we'll cross paths again but.....

I guess it's not too bad to have some hope...

Today was a good day...

I talked to two beautiful girls....got my ice cream.....ate my ice cream.....and enjoyed my ice cream...

Truly a productive day....

This school really does feel like a paradise...

But it would be a lie if I said I didn't have doubts...

I wonder if everything is just an illusion....

Well, we'll find out once May 1 arrives....

Hope for the best...

Expect for the worst....

(May 1...)

.....*I guess it was the latter.*

Sensei just revealed to us the truth about this school....

And now my classmates erupted simultaneously like a volcano...

" W-Wait, s-s-so you're saying we're broke?!" Ike exclaimed in shock.

" That is correct." Chabashira-sensei confirmed.

" And class points.....are you serious?! Why didn't sensei inform us earlier-"

" You are right that I didn't inform you earlier. But the only reason why you lost class points in the first place was because you all failed to act diligently....or at least the majority of you have failed and thus you ended up with 0." Sensei said without mercy.

" Sensei....isn't this unfair? How could we have possibly known-"

Hirata tried to appeal but Sensei quickly shuts him down.

" Hirata, haven't you already proper student etiquette back at primary school? That includes the rest of you. So why didn't you pay attention in class, be on time, and show active participation? You all decided to do the complete opposite. Truly trash, you all are." She said.

Hirata's brow twitched in frustration due to Sensei's remarks. Harsh they may be, but she was right.

I looked to my seatmate and she also wore a look of extreme disappointment....

" T-Then how do we earn our class points? I can't live without private points!" Yamauchi cried out and the boys sounded in agreement.

Sensei's expression then turned grim.

Huh? Why is she wearing the look of dread...?

" The director of this school will personally explain the methods....and the rules." She said.

" THE DIRECTOR?!" Each student exclaimed. They didn't expect the top position of this school to personally come here just to explain the methods....

I'm curious as to why that is....

In fact, who *is* the director of such a privileged school like this...

As if on cue, the door slides open....

And a woman with short stature , short blonde hair, and golden eyes stepped inside our classroom. She wore a soft smile and greeted Sensei before looking towards us.

" Hello students! I am the director of this school!" She says.

" Huh? Director? Doesn't she look a little...." Someone whispered. But I can tell what he was going to say.

Our 'director' does look a bit too young....

"Um, miss?" Karuizawa raises her hand and the woman nods to her, awaiting whatever question she has.

"How do we earn class points? None of us can enjoy our school lives without private points." She said.

"Well, that's why I'm here to explain it to you all! And don't worry, it's actually quite easy to earn back those class points." The director said.

"R-Really?!"

"Awesome!"

" Phew, that's a relief!"

Many students expressed their relief from hearing such a reassuring thing from the director herself....

" Well? How do we earn them?" Ike asked.

" You win a death game." She said.

" A WHAT?!" What was previously relief, their expressions showed faces of shock.

" You heard me!" The director claps, " This school conducts death games which will reward you with class points and punish you with grave consequences~"

" W-Wait, she's serious?!" Ike asked in disbelief.

" W-With all due r-respect, nothing bad will happen if we lose, right?!" Shinohara asked.

" Huh? Of course something bad will happen! What's the point of losing if nothing will actually happen? Are you a **dumbass**?" She chuckles.

" Huh? Hey you can't call a student like that-" But Shinohara's retort was cut short when the director's smile turned cold.

" Before I continue with the rest of the rules, my name is Director Lumine. That aside, please listen closely to what I am about to say." The director spoke with a tone of mischievous excitement.

" Rule 1. Do not try to escape. Rule 2. If you break rule number 1 then be prepared for ' grave' consequences." She said before smiling. " Understand? Make sure to remember these two rules. They are very important."

" Now for the explanation." She started, " This school isn't really a ' school'. Whether or not you learn a few things is NONE OF MY CONCERN. You see, 4 classes are pitted against each other in class wars. You will compete in death games and through death games, I've already said that you will earn class points. But there's something I forgot to add."

"" Everyone was silent as they watched Director Lumine writing the different classes and what's likely their current class points.

" Class D is currently last place with 0 class points. Class C 360 class points in third place, Class B 660 class points in second, and in first place we have Class A with 700 points." She said.

" Many might guess that those in Class A contains the smartest students since they lost the least points. But that's where they're wrong. " Lumine looks at us, " Everyone was sorted here through my own choices. I don't give a damn about how high your grades are or how much you excel in physical activities. I simply sorted the worst to class D because the worst class ALWAYS gives the best entertainment!"

" What? Are you saying that I'm assigned with people at the bottom of the barrel?!" Horikita shot up from her seat, her disappointed expression turned to anger.

" Of course! Why not?" Lumine said, mockingly. " Don't tell me that you think deserve better than where you are now. I'm sure your **brother** wouldn't agree, now would he?"

" brother?"

" Horikita-san has a brother?"

Our classmates murmured in surprise, and so was I. I didn't expect Horikita to have a brother...

Horikita froze at the mention of her brother. Is she perhaps scared of him?

" Anyways, aside from earning class points. If you lose or cause trouble for me then I'll deduct your class points." Lumine said.

" Huh? We already have zero though...." Someone muttered.

They had a point. The director won't possibly deduct us if we had no points to begin with-

" Then your points will go straight to the negatives. For example, since you have 0 and you decided to piss me off then....your class points should be -100! And that's me being kind." She laughs maniacally.

" H-HUH?! YOU CAN'T DO THAT! WE CAN'T POSSIBLY RECOVER FROM THAT-"

" Relax~ I haven't deducted points yet.....but...." Her eyes turned evil. " If you keep speaking then I might just apply it for reals...."

The student who expressed their frustration immediately shuts up and the tension between our class and the director sky rocketed.

" Anyways, if you earn enough class points that surpasses Class C...then you'll become Class C. I'm sure you know where I'm going with this?"

A ranking system? Overtaking other classes? This sounds so troublesome and completely detrimental to my desires...

" For these three years, if you all remain below Class A. Then NONE of you will receive the benefits of this school. None of you will have a high rating in going to university or applying for any job. Absolutely nothing." She said.

" WAIT, THAT'S BULLSHIT!" Sudo roared.

"THAT'S UNFAIR!"

" ALL THE TALK ABOUT THESE GAMES ARE ANNOYING! I'D RATHER GO HOME!"

" Who said that they wanted to go home?" Lumine asked as she gazed at us.

" Me! I want to go home! I ain't dealing with this shit!" Yamauchi raised his hand.

" Huh, are you serious, Haruki?!" Ike said.

" Haruki, you're going to give up?" Sudo asked, although he too had expressed his anger at these complicated rules. It seems like he wasn't planning to give up just yet.

" Yep. I mean, she's crazy! ' Death games', ' Class points', ' Grave consequences' or whatever. All this sounds too insane. I'm dropping out." Yamauchi said.

The rest of our classmates looked at each other and whispering about whether or not to do the same. Seems like nobody wants to sit with Director Lumine's rules...

But I can't possibly leave.....this school protects my freedom.....

" Yamauchi, right?" Lumine called out to him.

" Yeah." He nods.

"Are you sure you want to drop out?" Lumine smirks.

" yes." The moment Yamauchi answered that, I witnessed Chabashira-sensei's face morphed into one of horror. She was silent the entire time since Lumine had begun speaking, but sensei almost looked.....traumatized... after hearing Yamauchi's resolve to leaving.

" Is there anyone else who wants to leave?" Lumine asked around.

" me." A boy named Miyamoto raised his hand.

" Me too..." Hondo also raised his hand..

" Same here. I thought this school would focus on education but if the director just wants to play games....then this school isn't for me." Keisei, a diligent student, says as he raised his hand.

" Oh~ Such a pity.....well...it's your choice to leave I guess..."
Lumine shrugs.

I focused on Chabashira-sensei's panicked expression but she still remained silent on the matter, as if too afraid to speak up.

Why are you looking like that?

" S-Same here....I don't think I'm good for something like this..." A girl named Inogashira spoke and raise her hand.

A few other girls expressed their concerns and also raised their hands.

" 14 students? Wow." Lumine still kept that weird smile.

" We'll be heading out then...." Yamauchi said.

But the moment his hand touched the knob-

*** BANG!***

****THUD!****

" H-Huh...?" Miyamoto, who was behind Yamauchi, slowly processed what had just happened. The rest of us looked in shock as

we saw Yamauchi's corpse laying on the ground, bleeding right from the head.

" AAAAHHHHHH! HE GOT SHOT!" Hondo screamed and backed away.

" H-H-HE'S D-D-DEAD!" Inogashira choked on her words as she quickly backed away in panic.

The rest of the students who wanted to leave also backed away. The class erupted in chaos .

" HARUKI!!!!" Both Sudo and Ike cried out the name of their dead friend.

That....That actually just happened...?

The students who weren't screaming, simply stood speechless and

with wide eyes. I, too, was shocked to witness an actual death right in front of me in a school like this,

" Haha.....hahaha...." I began to hear laughing. I looked towards its source and it came from none other than the director herself.

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHHHAHAHAHAHAHHAHA! " She bellowed out in laughter and the screams went lower as they slowly paid attention to Director Lumine.

She had the look of a sadist as she continued laughing at the fact that she had killed someone. She held the gun in her hand as she tried to catch her breath.

" HAAAAHA! T-THAT WAS HILARIOUS! HAAAAHAHAHAH!!!!" She cried tears of joy.

" RULE NUMBER 1, YOU IDIOTS! " She looked at us with the expression of a complete psycho.

" ' DO NOT TRY TO ESCAPE' UNDERSTAND? AHAHAHAHAH!"
She continued laughing as if this were her favorite pasttime.

" Y-YOU JUST KILLED SOMEONE!"

" SOMEONE CALL THE POLICE! S-SHE JUST KILLED SOMEONE!"

" CHABASHIRA-SENSEI, DO SOMETHING!"

" GET ME AWAY FROM HER!"

Everyone wore panicked expressions, making their way to the very back of the classroom, clustered. While Horikita and I stayed in our seats, I have no idea what Horikita was currently feeling but I'm assuming it's the same with the others.

" Why are you all so scared?" Lumine smiles, " I told you there'd be **grave** consequences. Don't you remember rule number 2?"

" Chabashira-sensei, what do YOU think? Did I really do something wrong? I was only enforcing the rules and applying punishment, am I correct?" Lumine asks sensei.

"..Y...Yes....ma'am....that's all you were doing..." Sensei replied with a dead tone.

" See? Even your own sensei agrees!" Lumine laughs.

" Sensei stop joking around! Call help!"

" Sensei please! She just killed someone right in front of us!"

" SENSEI ARE YOU ALSO INSANE?!"

The girls began crying due to fear and seeking comfort from their friends while the boys wore angry looks mixed with absolute fear.

" Now, Now....don't be so hard on your sensei. She's just doing her job! After all, she has no choice but to listen to me. She's technically in the same situation as you guys!" Lumine said.

' Same situation'....?

I made sure to stay calm. I've experienced worst sights.

" Well then....I already told you the rules. I explained to you the basic details about the games. AND I've shown you how absolutely serious I am about this entire show! " Lumine begins applauding.

" An applause for me! Anyways, I'm going to check on the other classes. Sae-sensei will instruct you all to assemble at the gymnasium for the very first game of this school year. See ya there~" Lumine kept away her gun and was about to exit the room until the previously frozen Suzune, had stood up once again from her seat and spoke.

" Wait! What happened to my brother!" She asked.

Lumine stopped and looked at her.

" Oh, him? He's **dead**." she said, nonchalantly.

" D-Dead?! " Horikita's tone broke. tears began to slowly prick at her eyes as true panic began to set in...

So her brother is in this school....or if Lumine isn't lying....then he WAS in this school....

" D-Don't....joke about that....p-please tell me the truth...." Horikita pleaded. She looked timid and weak at the possibility of her brother passing away.

" If there's one thing that you and the rest can trust about me. It's that I speak no lies." Lumine said in a serious tone, opposite to her previously psychotic attitude.

"....." Horikita gripped her chair.

Tears began to fall down from her eyes.

" H-Horikita-san..." Our classmates wore looks of pity for Horikita. They seemed to express their sympathy for her.

" M-May I ask...how.....how he died...?" Horikita asked in a quiet voice.

" A kouhai with blonde hair decided to betray him during one of the games. Horikita Manabu was doing quite well for three years and only needed to survive one more game....until his trusted

Kouhai betrayed him at the very last moment....which led to his death. " Lumine spoke in a somber tone before quickly chuckling.

" It was an entertaining moment from my perspective! You all should've seen it!" She laughs. " Horikita Manabu looked absolutely horrid when he stared into the heartless eyes of his trusted kouhai! That second year sacrificed his senpai for class points! It was amazing!" She exclaimed in excitement.

" S....Someone.....betrayed him...?" Horikita muttered and gripped her chair tighter.

So this school will turn students with good will into the worst kind of people.....or maybe they already entered school, knowing deep down that they are horrible human beings.

Just like myself.

" Well then, see you all at the gymnasium! " Lumine waves good bye before leaving.

The class was silent and Horikita slammed her hands on the table repeatedly while crying. She broke down the moment the director left.

Nobody dared to interrupt her grieving....

this school....is **Hell**...under the guise of ' **Paradise**'....

CHAPTER END!

Introduction chapters tire me out when writing but they are quite necessary .

Next chapter will be the beginning of Game 1!

Do you have any guesses as to what Game 1 is going to be about?

Comment about it!

SadisticLumine, out~

Episode 2: Game 1: Protect the murderer!

Ayanokoji PoV

" We should go now. Everyone's already gone to the gymnasium. " I told the depressed Horikita, who refused to get up from her seat. Initially, I planned to leave her but I felt that would be too cruel of me to do so.

Horikita and I don't classify each other as ' friends' but I don't feel comfortable leaving her alone like this. Furthermore, the class might lost points if the people decided not to attend and follow Lumine's instructions.

"....." Horikita still didn't respond.

I sighed. I had no time for this. She can grieve his death later but not now.

" This might be insensitive of me but...." I grabbed her arm and forcefully pulled her from her seat. " You can grieve later. This isn't the time."

I expected Horikita to flail around in protest, muttering slurs, and screaming angry sentences in an attempt for me to let her go and leave her alone. I thought that she was the type of girl to do that.

But to my surprise, we made our way to the gymnasium in silence. Of course, I kept my grip on her arm and pulled her along and she didn't fight against it, rather, her face was still sullen and it almost feels like that the Horikita I'm pulling along is nothing but an empty doll.

Her brother truly holds that much importance to her....

We finally made it to the gymnasium and lined up with the rest of Class D. A few classmates of mine gave me a few nods of acknowledgement for staying and bringing Horikita along. Even Chabashira-sensei gave me an appreciative gaze but she quickly turned back to her stoic expression and stared blankly at the stage.

I glanced at Horikita, who was beside me, and she still didn't show any reaction. I decided to leave her be for now and focused on the people around me.

My eyes scanned the area for the different classes and I quickly spotted Ichinose who was.....wait....do we count as acquaintances? I do not wish to assume our relationship if she does not reciprocate and merely saw me as another guy that she was coincidentally kind to.

Yep, it's definitely safer for me to classify her in the category of 'someone I know' instead of acquaintances.

Anyways, moving on from Ichinose, I looked around further and spotted a boy with shoulder-length magenta hair with sharp magenta colored eyes. He had the air of someone to be feared but I wasn't sure to what extent.

I don't really know his name. But his class is most likely Class C.

Anyways, time to search for someone else that hopefully belongs to Class A.

I further scanned the area with my eyes and found myself staring at a girl with a fragile-looking stature with lilac colored hair and a black beret on top of her head. She wore a calm expression and she had the air of someone with ' absolute superiority' and could become a troublesome person to make an enemy out of.

Unlike Horikita who simply possessed a superiority complex.

This petite girl with lilac hair was different. She calmly gazed around her surroundings, ever-so calculating, as if gathering a person's strength and weakness simply by looking at them. Or perhaps I'm overestimating her abilities. But the fact remains that she's a person I do not want to involve myself with in any given context.

She's definitely someone who belongs to Class A, despite her clear disability because she's currently supporting herself with one cane and I'm confident that it's not just for show. She looked fragile enough to assume that she has a physical problem, but it's amazing

that she can exude such a superior aura despite looking fragile.

Shockingly, I came to realize that she was currently staring back at me.

For a split moment, her eyes showed recognition but I quickly ignored that by averting my gaze towards the stage since I was embarrassed to have been caught red-handed. I hope this small blunder will not come biting me in the back later.

A few moments later, the gymnasium lights blacked out and a spot light was shined upon the stage.

How dramatic...

" Hello, everyone! " The director stood on stage and greeted us cheerfully. But we were far from reciprocating such positive energy...

" Aw, come on! Wear a smile on your faces! We're going to be playing a game after all!" She laughed and I managed to hear my classmates grumbling about how psychotic and annoying she is.

" Ahem, " Lumine clears her throat, " Well, that aside, I will now begin the introduction of your first **death game**. Pay close attention." She said with a smirk.

" The game is called ' Protect the murderer!' and as the name suggests, protecting the murderer should be the main objective." She said.

'Protect the murderer'? How peculiar....

Lumine pressed a button on her remote and the reel started playing. She began to show us visuals of how the game will follow while explaining the general rules.

"In each class, there will be an assigned murderer. And everyone else will be assigned with the role of 'ordinary citizens'." She explained, "Ordinary citizens will be given daily tasks that **MUST** be completed or else they will suffer the loss of class points, and if you're already zero, then obviously you will go to the negatives and I'm sure that **Class D** in particular, have zero wish to endure such a painful journey." She laughs at us mockingly.

Some of the students from other classes glanced at us, and my classmates looked embarrassed to say the least. Ending up with 0 class points total at the start of the month IS indeed a pitiful sight to see.

" The class murderer's job is to eliminate as many ordinary citizens from the other classes by shooting them with this gun. " Lumine pulls out an advanced looking toy gun that's similar to the types used in laser tag (Thank u internet-sensei) though I haven't experienced playing it.

" Ordinary citizens will wear headbands with camera attached, emergency headlights, and also night vision goggles. The class murderers will be given the same items as the citizens while also possessing the ability to control most of the areas around the school like shutting doors and messing with the lights temporarily. " She said.

" Huh? W-Wait, are you serious?! The class murderers are allowed to mess with us like this? "

" They have too big of an advantage!"

" Shouldn't we possess anything to protect ourselves with?"

Many students from different classes expressed their concerns regarding the abilities of both ordinary citizens and class murderers.

" Hmmm..." Lumine feigned a thinking expression before shrugging, " Dunno!"

" HAH?!"

But Lumine ignored their noises of protest and continued

explaining the rules.

" Now for the main objective. I already mentioned that it's just as the title suggests, but I'll explain further. The class murderers from their respective classrooms should be protected at all cost with the help of their own civilians. The civilians must do everything they can to conceal their class murderer's identity because at the end of each round , a meeting will be held in your own respective classrooms. You must figure out the murderer from the different classes and kill them off to win the game. To achieve victory, your class murderer must be kept alive at all cost. THAT is why the game is titled as is." she said.

" So the civilians have some use after all...." The lilac haired girl loudly spoke.

" Indeed, perhaps they might not be just some useless lamb waiting to be slaughtered. kukuku." The magenta haired boy also commented with a weird laugh.

" Ryuen-kun, that's not a very kind way to refer to your classmates. " Ichinose remarked with a smile.

" Oh shut up. I have no interest in hearing anything a girl like you has to say." The guy who I now recognize as ' Ryuuen ' had said.

" Fufu, why don't we let the director speak? You and Ichinose-san can save your little quarrel for later." The lilac haired girl interjected.

" Care to join in the little ' quarrel' then, Sakayanagi? You might prove a more interesting opponent in a verbal argument. After all, you're useless when it gets physical, kukuku!" He laughs.

' Sakayanagi' so that's her name. I'll be sure to remember it along with Ryuuen's name.

The three of them had a staredown. The air felt uncomfortable with Ichinose's everlasting smile, Ryuuen's malicious stare, and Sakayanagi's smug know-it-all expression.

Would it be right to assume that these three are class leaders?

Lumine clears her throat, abruptly stopping the staredown between the three.

" Could you three do that AFTER my explanation? If not, then would you like a punishment?" Lumine asked, innocently.

" Hah, continue." Ryuen instantly said. I didn't expect him to give up that fast...

Could something have happened back at his class too?

Sakayanagi and Ichinose also agreed and awaited Lumine's continuation of her explanation.

" Very good! It's great that you remembered that valuable lesson that I PERSONALLY taught you, Ryuuken! As an 'educator' of this facility, even if it's just a guise for my own entertainment. I feel so touched!" Lumine said.

Ryuuken glares at Lumine but kept his mouth closed. There was definitely something he wanted to retort but it seems like he's also well aware of Lumine's psychotic behavior and complete lack of empathy.

" Anyways, continuing on..." Lumine presses the remote again and

begins to show us the next visuals. " There are three ways to win. The first, is for the class murderer to kill off most of the civilians from other classes without getting caught. And the second method, is to vote whoever you may think is the other classes murderer and eliminate them from the game to win. Your own class murderer can also attempt to hunt the other class murderer's themselves and kill them off but that won't be easy now, won't it? And now for the rewards!" Lumine said.

Huh? Did she skip over the third option?

" The rewards in winning the game with the first option, your class will receive 200 class points plus a **game protection point**. " She said.

A game protection point? Everyone must be wondering about that too.

" Oh, right. Game protection points are special points that can have you skip an entire game if you do not wish to participate,

though you will not reap any rewards so that's the downside. A **class game protection point** will apply to the entire class and you only need one to enable it." She explains.

Everyone quickly nodded.

" Now, the rewards for the second option, is that the class will receive 400 class points plus class protection point AND an additional reward for the class murderer, which is 100,000 private points. Isn't that nice?" Lumine said.

Everyone's eyes widened at that. The second option definitely caught their interests, and are now most likely hoping to be assigned with the murderer role to reap such benefits.

Although the second option rewards handsomely.....it's also quite difficult. To pinpoint all the class murderers and eliminate them via vote or kill.....it's a difficult task all on its own. And extremely risky if others begin to suspect you....

High risk, high reward. A fair trade, I suppose.

" Um, miss Director Lumine?" Someone raised their hand.

" Hm?" Lumine looked towards them.

" You said there were three ways to win....but I think you skipped over the third one and its rewards, or was I mistaken?" They pointed out.

Good. Seems like I wasn't the only one who noticed.

" Ah, I'm glad you pointed that out. I was waiting for someone to point it out because the third option....is quite cruel." Lumine smiles the moment she said the word ' cruel'. How fitting, considering she killed someone without hesitation and justified her action by correlating it with the so-called ' rules'.

" But first, I'd like to explain one more detail in the voting system. You see, the class will obviously decide on who to vote off but the voting system doesn't work by majority wins. Rather, it's the **minority** who'll win the entire decision. So if one person were to vote someone different from the rest of the class, whom agreed to vote on the other person. Then that one person who's the MINORITY vote.....will win." She said.

" WHAT?!" Everyone was shocked.

" W-W-WAIT WOULDN'T THAT BE AN EASY WAY FOR SOMEONE TO BETRAY THE CLASS!"

" THE MINORITY WINS? ARE YOU SERIOUS!"

" THAT'S A HUGE ISSUE-"

" If you truly trust your classmates, then it SHOULDN'T be an issue, yes?" Lumine interrupted. " All you have to do is to discuss on whom to vote and agree. That's it! "

"I see...." A bald headed boy spoke, " Does this peculiar voting system relate to the third option?" He asked.

" Yep! As expected of a smart man like yourself, Katsuragi!" Lumine applauded. " You immediately connected the dots."

' Katsuragi', huh. He's standing right next to Sakayanagi, which means he's also from Class A.

" Now, just like what Katsuragi said, the voting system DOES have a connection to the third option, which I personally LOVE to call....the ' **traitor route**'. " her smile brightens, " If ever someone decides to betray their class and sacrifice their class murderer. Then the traitor will be rewarded with 500,000 private points AND their own personal protection point which only applies to the traitor alone. It's the easiest route for anyone to take, no?" She said.

But is it really worth it? 500,000 private points may sound like a lot but for us in Class D, it's only a temporary privilege that will eventually run out because currently we remain at zero. Therefore, the only choice we will likely agree on is the first and second choice....

That is....

If there's truly a selfish one among us.....who'd choose the easy route for their own selfish pleasure.

Everyone in the gymnasium was silent. They were most likely thinking about the third option in fear of there being an actual traitor who'd choose such an option.

Director Lumine said that the third choice was cruel.....but.....

I feel as if she was only referring to it being cruel for Class D alone, who has zero points.

" Oh, and there is actually one secret behind the traitor route....but....." Lumine giggles, " Whoever decides to become traitor, then I wish them luck in finding out the **secret**."

Secret? Now she's adding more fuel to the fire....our every growing curiosity as human beings will compel us to reveal any hidden secret if and when it's possible.

She's purposefully trying to lead one of us in choosing the traitor route...

Is it because it's her favorite route because it's fun?

Or....

*Is it because it's the best route.....**to win it all?***

We were shortly dismissed and promptly returned to our respective classrooms. Director Lumine said that today was a 'free' day and it's our chance to discuss a plan on how to win this death game.

She also added that additional details that she'd forgotten to explain will DEFINITELY be explained tomorrow.

But for now....

"I'm the class murderer." Kushida confessed immediately.

We have to create a plan that'll protect our class murderer at all cost....

CHAPTER END!

Basically a game fusion of Amogus and Werewolf but I added my own twist to it by turning it into a game that depends on absolute trust.

I hope the idea was to your liking and if there are any missing details that you'd like to be answered then pls comment here so I can explain it in the next chapter XD

Yep, I purposefully did that just in case cuz I rlly feel invested rn.....I already planned 3 games for this fic so ye.

Pls forgive me if the future 'big brain' tactics I came up with are not up to par cuz I'm not used to writing such things. But do expect the tactics to be more simple in explanation and method cuz that's how I write. Simple.

I hope you enjoyed this chapter!

KawaiiLumine, out~

Episode 3: Ayanokoji hates this game!

Ayanokoji PoV

" Everyone, I am the class murderer." Kushida confessed.

" Really?!" Everyone exclaimed.

Nobody would've expected the ' angel' of our class to be the class murderer.

" I see, thank you for telling us immediately." Hirata smiled. " Now we can start forming a plan. Guys, how about we grab some tables and connect them to form a bigger rectangular shaped table."

Hirata asked the boys.

They nodded and began helping Hirata organizing the tables.

If this were any usual day, then most of the boys that were currently helping Hirata would show looks of protest due to their hatred against ikemen. But ever since this school's true purpose was revealed, in fear of dying, they no longer showed protest and are willing to cooperate without question.

However, it seems like there is one person who can't cooperate....

I looked towards Horikita, who remained unmoving beside me, her eyes remaining downcast.

When will she snap out of it? How long will she stay in this state?

" Does anyone have any ideas they'd like to share? Or should I start first?" Hirata asked everyone seated while the few that didn't were simply standing around the table.

Everyone was silent....

Seems like nobody wishes to share their ideas or perhaps they

had none to begin with. Everyone will look towards Hirata as their shepherd.

" Okay then, since nobody has spoken up yet. I'll share my idea first." Hirata said, " I want our class to win with the first option. I believe we'll have a better chance in winning if we go with that option, it might take a while but at the very least, it's a much safer bet, don't you agree?"

Everyone glances at each other for a moment, checking if the majority were in agreement before facing Hirata again.

" But we'll only win 200 class points, right? Even if it's a safe bet, I don't think 20,000 private points will keep me going for the next month." Karuizawa spoke, selfishly.

Keisei sighed at her complaints. " Are you serious, Karuizawa-san? That's what you're worried about? Not only are we in the worst spot, but a classmate of ours had just DIED!" He said. " Your shopping expenses are worth nothing in this school! I get the need of private points but what's more important is surviving! If we stay at zero or below an imaginary 'minimum' of class points then it's possible that all of us will perish!"

Everyone's eyes widened at that.

Keisei was usually a calm individual, but that also goes for most of our classmates who had some sort of calmness to them. But now that calmness has dissipated and replaced with anxiety and the need to gain class points no matter what. I was surprised that Karuizawa would continue thinking about her own selfish needs, but perhaps it's a way of coping for her.

By having enough points to continue her high-maintenance lifestyle, then she could ignore all the negatives of this school and continue living in ignorant bliss.

Still, she was in the wrong for worrying of such a trivial thing....

I thought Karuizawa would arise with another selfish retort but to my surprise...

".....You're right....I'm sorry...." Was all she said.

Keisei was caught off-guard by that response (along with the other boys who were used to her headstrong persona) but simply accepted it before speaking to Hirata.

" I think going for the safer bet is a good idea, Hirata. Even if the rewards aren't as good as the second option." Keisei expressed his opinion.

" Wait!" Ike raises his hand, " I know that the first option may sound easier but....this is Kushida-san we're talking about!"

" Eh?" Kushida was confused by such a statement and so was everyone else who looked towards Ike.

" Could you please elaborate, Ike-kun?" Hirata asked.

Ike stood up from his seat, " Kushida-san has the best social skills known to mankind! She can get along with anybody and if we use that to our advantage, then the search for the class murderers can be done! " he reasons. (Though I feel as if he was secretly trying to score brownie points.)

" Hm? Wouldn't that cause suspicion? The essence of this game is trust and we're forced to trust each other while remaining suspicious of everyone outside of our class. This same rule applies to other classes, so won't they be suspicious of Kushida-san's behavior?" Matsushita pointed out.

" Woah, Matsushita-san you can think like that?" One of the girls asked.

" Huh? Um, yes? I've watched many detective films is all..." Matsushita laughs nervously.

The girls nodded while Keisei tried to think about both Ike and Matsushita's points.

" I'm inclined to agree with Matsushita-san. If we let Kushida-san roam around and socializing especially at this type of game....then that will certainly arouse suspicion. " Keisei replied after weighing their points.

" Uh...well....I guess..." Ike sat back down, looking defeated.

But alas, a fellow comrade also stood up and suprisingly backed up Ike.

" Wait hold on a minute! I think Ike is onto something with his idea. Please hear me out!" A feminine looking boy spoke. I think his name was....Ijuin?

" Please proceed." Hirata nodded.

" While I understand that letting Kushida-san socialize randomly will cause suspicion from other classes. I think there is a way in which we can do it in a more discreet manner." Ijuin said.

Hm? I wonder what he's planned...

" A discreet manner, you say?" Yukimura seemed interested in what he has to say now.

(Sorry I just realized I've been calling him ' Keisei' instead of Yukimura cuz this Kiyo aint getting along with him yet.)

" Yeah! I'm thinking that in order to make the plan work. We should put Kushida-san with her own group of girls and they'll go around making conversation and such. That way, even if suspicion arises, they won't know which one of the girls are the real murderers." Ijuin said.

It was a simple plan, that has the potential to be effective.....

However, it wasn't quite well-polished. There a few holes that can be easily exploited but I'm curious to see if one of them will point them out....

"...That idea has actually some merit to it. However, " Yukimura pushes his glasses up with two fingers, " It's not polished enough."

" I like the idea of having Kushida-san be situated in a group at all times. But the downside is that other classes will be able to narrow it down to Kushida's group if they arouse suspicion. From there, it'll become a process of elimination and the classes will eliminate their group one by one. " Yukimura explained.

Correct.

" Oh...I see..." Ijuin nodded. " I guess that it's a dumb idea, huh...."

" No, I never said that. Besides, there is one little adjustment we could make that can make this plan effective." Yukimura replied.

Everyone looked interested as they listened to Yukimura.

" Instead of having Kushida be grouped alone. We can also have our own groups, we can divide ourselves into groups of four or duos and complete our individual tasks together. We shan't separate from our assigned partner or groups if we go with this plan so that we can confuse the other classes a lot better. " He said.

" And we have Kushida-san act like she's doing tasks?" Hirata interjected.

" Precisely. We need to protect the murderer's identity at all cost. Every day, Kushida-san should eliminate at least one ordinary citizen so we can slowly narrow down our options. Director Lumine may not have said this, but I believe the class murderer's elimination will be announced if they're caught." Yukimura finished.

" Hm, it sounds like a good plan to me!" Karuizawa comments.

" Yeah! I don't see anything wrong if we go with this plan."
Onodera said.

The boys and girls also shared noises of agreement.

" Well, well, it seems like everyone is in agreement?" Hirata turns to me, " What do you think, Ayanokoji-kun, Horikita-san?"

Huh? They're asking us too?

Everyone looks towards me and Horikita. They seemed curious about my opinion.....nah who am I kidding, Look at them, they look absolutely bored.....they're already expecting me to agree since I'm just a guy with the title of 'loner' in Class D. And Horikita is just staying silent like a broken doll.....

I guess I'll answer for us both.

" I don't know about Horikita....but I'm not against the idea. Though, I don't think Horikita would disagree either but it's your choice to believe me or not..." I told Hirata.

Hirata nods in understanding, " I would love it if Horikita-san were to answer.....but I understand her current mood.....so we'll just proceed with the plan." he said.

I nodded and Hirata quickly began retelling and summarizing the plan once more for those who didn't fully understand....

Yukimura cleared up most of the exploits that I found in this plan.....

Except for one thing.

He'd forgotten to take in account of what the other classes will come up with. There's a reasonably high chance that other classes will also perform this strategy since it's simple and logical.....and they might even prepare back up countermeasures once they see us do the same....

Yukimura is perceptive but I'm afraid that it wasn't enough....

" All right, Kushida-san will be grouped with Minami, Mori, Sato, Matsushita, and Karuizawa-san. " Hirata said and everyone agreed, though Kushida expressed her concerns of the possibility of her messing up.....but Ike and the other Kushida fanboys quickly tried to express their confidence in her abilities.

Eventually, Kushida seemed boosted by their confidence and thanks them with a wink and a smile which probably gave them heart attacks....

While Hirata was busy grouping everyone else....

I realized that I was being left out....

Ouch, that hurts.

Well.....there is one person I could partner myself with. I felt myself sighing at the thought of having to partner with her of all people but I'm currently left with no choice.

" Horikita, let's partner up?" I asked her.

"...." She still didn't respond.

Seriously, when is she going to start talking again? Heck, I'm completely fine if she throws insults at me as long as she can respond to my words because right now, it feels like I'm talking to a doll and it's lowkey driving me mad.

" I'll take your silence as a yes...." I sighed.

The first game will begin tomorrow.....

Today is the second of May. Everyone arrived to class on time and were currently seated in their assigned desks. As I observed my classmates' expressions and habits, it led me to assume that they were currently extremely anxious.

Chabashira-sensei finally walks in the classroom with a cart full of items.

" Good morning, students." Sensei greeted monotonously and presented to us the items.

" There have been a few adjustments made by the director regarding the game rules. Class Murderers no longer have the ability to control any area of the school." Sensei said.

Us, civilians sighed in relief.

" However, in exchange, the probability of civilians receiving excruciating and humiliating tasks have increased." she said.

" Huh? Wait how excruciating or humiliating are we talking, sensei?" Hondo asked.

" Unfortunately, I am not allowed to specify, but be prepared for whatever task you receive." She replied.

And the unease returned. While most of us were relieved that the class murderers don't possess too much power over the school, we are left dreading for whatever tasks we receive as ' ordinary civilians'.

" Furthermore, the next adjustment, are the items the civilians will possess. They will no longer possess the headlights or night goggles as they are related to the first adjustment in which the

murderers can no longer manipulate the lights." She continued, "Also, director Lumine wants to make one thing ABSOLUTELY clear for those assigned with the civilian role. And that is to perform the task no matter what or else you lose class points. You will receive the tasks on your phone."

' No matter what'? What is she exactly trying to imply here?

" In other words, you are not allowed to take bathroom breaks or eat unless the tasks tell you to." She said.

" HUH?" Everyone shot up from their seats, ready to protest.

" C-Come on, t-that's unreasonable!"

" Y-Yeah, w-w-what if we REALLY have to go?!"

" Then unless you're willing to lose class points, then I suggest holding it in until the round ends." Sensei answered.

Truly....this director is crazy....

" Daily rounds will begin at 8 am until 5 pm. 5 pm to 6 pm is when the voting time starts, so sit down with your classmates and discuss on who to vote." Sensei then points towards the blank voting cards on the teacher's desk.

" Use the voting cards to write down the person you want to vote on. The voting cards will remain anonymous so do be careful. The class votes will be announced 30 minutes after the voting process is finished and during those 30 minutes, you are free to eat lunch in the cafeteria or take a bathroom break. However, you are still required to use points in purchasing food." Sensei said.

Everyone looked sullen due to the fact that most of us are broke.

And those who still have points, are forced to buy cheap meals instead of the fancy and expensive ones they'd been eating the past month. And those who have no points are free to grab the free meals that aren't exactly desirable to eat....but it's edible.

" Well, that's about it for the adjustments. Now I want you all to gather around the cart because I'll be explaining the way these special items work." She said.

I got up from my seat and followed everyone else to the cart. I remained at the back of the crowd and I could just barely see what sensei was currently holding. It was some sort of head strap and on the other hand was a strap for the chest.

Both straps have sensors on the center....

" Civilians and class murderers will be wearing these straps. These straps have sensors and cameras installed to keep track of your movements and to see if you're being faithful to the rules of the game. Violate the rules and either straps will cause a violent shock to coarse through your body. So please, don't try and act smart." She sighs.

Everyone grimaced at that.

" As for the class murderer, " Sensei takes out the gun that was presented yesterday and hands it to Kushida. " You are the murderer, yes?"

" Yes, sensei." Kushida said.

" Then be sure to use the gun in eliminating civilians or whoever you think are the class murderers. The gun will only work if you shoot at the headstrap or the chest strap, so make sure to not have a shaky grip and stand firm. Otherwise, you'll simply waste a shot because the cooldown of the gun lasts about 30 minutes." She said.

30 minutes.....well, a cooldown time was to be expected. If there wasn't a cooldown time, then the class murderers will just go on a rampage, killing anyone they see until the round ends.

" Now, the round will begin soon. Please put on the items."

" HUH?! DRINK 15 LITERS OF WATER? W-WAIT, I'M NOT ALLOWED TO ATTEND THE BATHROOM UNLESS ALLOWED BY THE TASK, RIGHT? AH SHIT, I'M FUCKED!" Ike screamed in horror while Sudo patted his friend's back, already wishing him peace in death.

What a horrible start for Ike.....I feel bad for him but...

I looked down towards my task....

' Buy a cat costume, wear it, and then ask for a girl's comment!'

I sighed. Perhaps I should save the pity for myself....

I thought this wasn't too bad of a task. I mean, it's a cat costume and what I imagined was pretty innocent compared to what the task actually WANTS me to buy...

(I laughed for about 5 - 7 minutes at what I had planned for Kiyo lmao.)

It's barely even a costume! It's basically asking me to walk around almost naked!

Well, I just need a girl to leave comments on it.....

I sighed again. Hopefully Horikita will at least speak up and leave any comments good or bad, I don't care. Just please....I beg you to speak at this crucial task...

I looked to the silent Horikita.

" I want you to help me with my task first..."

I sighed as I looked at my reflection...

Director Lumine is truly a sadist for giving me such an embarrassing task....

" Horikita, I'm coming out now. Please say something, ANYTHING regarding what I'm wearing.....PLEASE." I called out to her. I told her sit right outside the dressing room...

I took a deep inhale and then exhale.

Here I go.

I opened the dressing room door and stepped out.

" Well, what do you think? Just say anything even if it's-...." I paused.

"Horikita...?" I said slowly as I stared at the seat she was SUPPOSED to be waiting in.

"I'm fucked." I muttered. I'm not one to use such vulgar words in any context....but this....was one hell of an exception.

I immediately began hearing footsteps from the corner in the hallway and so i decided to quickly head back inside the dressing room.

Ugh, how am I going to deal with this?!

At this point, I'd rather die in this 'death game' than continuing on with this task...

Haah....okay....no need to think like that. Remain calm and figure things out....

If Horikita's not here....then there's always one other option....

Dressing room attendant POV

Wasn't there a boy who entered one of the dressing rooms a while

ago?

It's been around 30 minutes and I haven't seen him step out...

Perhaps I should go and ask if he's okay in there....

I proceeded to make my way to the dressing room corridor and walked in front of the many doors. I can hear some noise coming from door number 3, hopefully it's that boy.

I knocked on the door.

" Sir, are you okay in there? " I asked, kindly.

The noises suddenly stopped as soon as I uttered those words. Confused, I began knocking on the door again.

" Sir? It's been 30 minue- MPPPGGHH!!!!" Without warning, the door opened and a hand grabbed my arm and quickly pulled me inside while his other hand covered my mouth, keeping my noises muffled.

" Haah....I've been waiting for you..." He spoke in a monotone voice.

w-waiting for me?!

" Miss.....what do you think of my outfit?" He asked.

WHAT?

" Oh, sorry...I'm covering your mouth. Okay, I will let go but when you look at me, please leave a comment." He said.

I just nodded. I wanted to get out of here as soon as possible! This kid is a weirdo!

He lets me go and I immediately turned around, ready to scold him until I froze at the sight.

W-WHY I-I-IS HE W-WEARING SUCH A LEWD COSTUME?!

" miss, what do you think?" He asked.

My eyes zoned in on his hard chest and well-defined abs and his biceps looked perfect! What is this? WHO is this? Was this boy sculptured by greek sculptors? Perhaps by Phidias? Lysippos? Praxiteles? Heck, perhaps even a collab of the three?!

" Miss....are you drooling?"

Eh? me?

I quickly put a hand near my mouth and felt some liquid dripping.

HAH? I WAS DROOLING?!

"I've got no time for this." The boy spoke, seemingly impatient.

As I was about to say something, he suddenly pinned me to the wall.

I-I'm getting the katedon treatment?! Am I a female lead in a romance manga?!

"What do you think of my outfit?" He asked.

My face was burning up due to the closeness between us. I tried to avert my eyes downwards but...

THAT WAS A BIG MISTAKE....

When my eyes looked down, I noticed a huge ' monster' on his waist. It was struggling to break free from those tight shorts!

" y-y-you" I lost control of myself, I was stuttering all over. " l-l-look-!"

THIS IS TOO MUCH FOR A WOMAN LIKE ME!

" YOU LOOK HOT!!!!!!!"

And then my world began turning black as I felt myself feeling weak....

Ayanokoji PoV

I caught the girl as she suddenly went limp.

" She passed out...." I muttered and gently placed her on the ground, leaning her on the wall.

I checked my phone to see if this was valid...

' Congratulations! You completed the task!'

I sighed in relief.

I better change quick before the girl wakes up.

I stepped out of the dressing room, feeling a wave of relief after finishing that embarrassing task.

Now....where did Horikita go...

I suddenly received a new notification on my phone.

' Help clear a friend's task!'

Perfect.

I silently walked around the area where Horikita was supposed to be according to the map the task sent me for her location. I made sure to stay in busy crowds, so as to not get picked off by any class murderers while also keeping a mental note of the people I see.

The air was tense.

The students who were roaming around Keyaki mall may have been acting like normal, but it was incredibly forced. They had tasks to do but also had to watch out for themselves or else they're easy prey....

Hopefully Kushida and her group are doing their best to gather information.

After a while of searching, I finally spotted Horikita, she was near pallet cafe.

I quickly bolted towards her and grabbed her by the arm.

" Horikita....I finally found you." I started.

" Why did you leave? Didn't I tell you to sit there and wait back at the dressing corridor? My task should've been over in 5 minutes if you had just done that." I said.

"....I had a task to do....that's why I left." She replied. I was taken off-guard by that, perhaps I was used to her moping around and staying silent....

" haah....you could've at least informed me....and you just had to wait for me and leave a comment but..."I sighed, " That doesn't matter. My new task says I have to help you complete yours. So where exactly IS your task?"

She silently points towards pallet cafe.

" What exactly is your task there?" I asked.

She shows me her phone.

Oh you've gotta be kidding me....

Ugh, this maid costume feels so weird....

Well, it's better than that bunny costume....

Still, this feels so humiliating and I feel like these tasks are destroying what little dignity I have....

Well, at least Horikita was also wearing a maid costume but she's lifelessly serving her customers with zero emotion.

Well, it's not I'm going to be any different.

" Hello, ladies. What would you like to order?" I asked.

They looked shock to see me, a man in a maid costume, to be serving them at this fine morning.

" Um...well..." They showed me the orders from their tasks on their phone. I see, that makes sense why they're here in the first place. Ordering a very weird combination...

" very well, it will arrive shortly." I told them.

I made my way towards their table but paused for a moment as I managed to overhear something quite interesting from their conversation...

" Haah, Ryuuen's plan for this game is crazy..." One of them said in hushed whispers to try and avoid being eavesdropped by the surrounding customers who were also students.

Little did they know, I have quite above average sense of hearing....

" I know right? like, he really isn't hesitating on sacrificing some of us...." the other replied.

Interesting...

So Ryuen is the type of guy to use such methods....

I have a few hypothesis on what he's trying to do...

He already seemed to be the delinquent type but this is still quite suprising to hear. I'll be sure to keep note of it, but for now, I need to give them their orders before they notice me eavesdropping.

" Here are your order, ladies." I finally arrived to their table.

I looked at my phone.

' Task complete!'

Nice.

" What about you, Horikita?" I turned to her.

She silently nodded. Seems like hers was validated too without error.

" Well, we should probably stay low for now and move discreetly around the mall while waiting for new tasks." I said. Fortunately enough, it seems like there's a time interval for each new task so that's good.

" Let's go-"

But Horikita suddenly grabbed my arm and pushed me into a dark corner.

I looked at her, completely confused. I looked around and realized that this was place where students wouldn't usually look at. In better terms, we were currently in hiding.

Horikita took deep breaths and I felt an uncomfortable atmosphere between us...

" Ayanokoji-kun..." She spoke my name.

I haven't heard say my name in so long...

" What is it? Why did you push me here? Why ARE we here?" I asked her.

"....You.....You scored 50's on your entrance exam, didn't you?"

....

How....How did she know that.

"...I don't know what you're talking about." I replied.

" You scored 50's in Math, English, Science, Social studies, Japanese.....even on the recent short test. You also scored 50 points...." She then looked at me with her empty gaze, " Why is that?"

" Coincidences can be freaky-"

" Don't lie to me-"

" I'm not lying to you."

" Then explain why you've been scoring exactly 50 points in every test. I refuse to believe that it's pure luck or coincidence because luck eventually runs out."

" Then believe what you want to believe but what I'm telling you is the truth. It's just luck-"

" Then why did you solve the hardest questions, using complex solutions, while putting wrong answers on the easy questions!" She said in an angry tone.

How did she get this information?

....

I sighed.

There's no merit in lying to her any further. This is a situation I can't slip away from....

".....Fine. I did. I intentionally scored 50's."

".....So she was right.....you.....you...."Her angered expression melted into one of shock as she took a few steps back.

Who is the ' she' that Horikita is referring to?

" She didn't lie.....that woman...."She said with gritted teeth.

" Who are you referring to?" I asked her.

She looked at me with a furious gaze, a certain fire in her eyes that I hadn't witnessed ever since she was told that her brother had died.

" The Director." She spoke with venom in her tone.

.....So it was Director Lumine who told her that....

Tch. So it seems like the director has some information about me.....maybe even a few things regarding my past before coming to this school.

She wanted to provoke me. That woman....

" She showed me your papers....I was shocked....I was in denial.....but I wanted to hear you say it. To confirm whether you did it or not." She said.

" When and where did she show you that?"

" Last night, she just suddenly came knocking on my door and I initially wanted to ignore her at first but she already a duplicate key ready. So she just waltzed right in and proceeded to spout to me....what I initially assumed were lies to rile me up.....deep down I wish it were lies.....but now I know...." She clenches her fist.

" You....you're an anomaly, Ayanokoji-kun...."

" Anomaly? You're overreacting."

" no....I'm not.....in fact, when the director shot one of our classmates, you were sitting there wearing an apathetic expression. At first, you looked suprised but it quickly returned to its normal face....as if.....as if you've seen worse....or rather, it's as if you've seen this happen multiple times." She said.

....So she paid attention despite being in shock as well....

"....Ayanokoji-kun, I think....as much as it pains me to say it.....I think that you're the only one who can help me." She said.

" Help you? If it's reaching Class A then please stop worrying about that. Our classmates have no choice but to aim for it-"

" I couldn't care less about Class A. " She interrupted me.

" I want you to help me get revenge for my brother's death."

"...."

She looked serious about it.

" What if director Lumine was bluffing-"

" She's not a liar. That's the only thing I'm sure of about her, other than her psychotic nature..." She said with disgust. She seemed to loathe everything about Lumine, but it was reasonable to do so.

I'm sure a lot of students have formed hatred for Lumine.

But I don't care about how Horikita feels....nor do I care about the rest of the others....

I don't give a single damn about her brother's death.

" I refuse."

CHAPTER END!

Wew, unexpectedly long chapter.

I thought of messing with Kiyo in this game and I couldn't stop laughing at my imagination.

There was actually a lot more I planned (funny moments) but imma save it for next chapter.

I'll end this episode with a serious note for both Kiyo and

Horikita.

SadisticLumine, out~

Episode 4: Recklessness...

Ayanokoji PoV

" I refuse."

I do not wish to involve myself in her little 'mission'.

" No.....No you can't refuse!" She said to me in a desperate tone.

I shrugged.

" I can. And I just did." I said in a matter-of-fact tone.

" No.....please.....at least think about it a bit more-"

" Horikita. I have no intention of helping you get revenge for someone I don't care about. This is your problem, not mine, so don't rope me into it." I said, ending the conversation between us.

I turned around, ready to exit this dark corner until I felt her hand grabbing my arm with a tight grip, she halted my movement. I looked back at her, feeling a little irritated.

" What?" I asked.

" Please....Please help me...." She pleaded like a helpless child. Her tone reminded me of my past, the children who yearned to be lent a hand by me....

But back then.....I cared for none, and thus, I simply glanced at them before continuing my way.

That part of me hasn't changed.

And so....

" **God, you're pathetic, aren't you?**" I spoke to her.

I grabbed her wrist from the same hand that she grabbed my arm with and yanked her closer towards me.

" Listen closely, I want nothing to do with you. If you continue to bother me regarding your little
' revenge' then I will eliminate you myself." I said to her, coldly.

I watched as her expression morphed into a face I was very familiar with. Just like **them**.

" And I don't mean eliminating you from this game....." I closed in on her face, " I mean eliminating you from this school."

I do not intend to make choices that serve no benefit for myself.

That's the mindset instilled upon me ever since I was young.

" A-Ayano....Ayanokoji-kun..." Her tone was shaky, full of fear. I can tell that Director Lumine must've told her something else regarding my identity. If I were to guess, she must have told Horikita that I was an individual with a special background.

That ambiguity that director Lumine instilled upon Horikita's weak mind, is the exact reason why Horikita should feel the most fear if she ever went on my bad side. The fact that she knows little to nothing about me, provides her with an ample supply of logic to not push the matter further.

"....O-Okay...." She finally said, her eyes losing that spark and looking absolutely defeated.

Satisfied with her reply, I immediately let go of her wrist and returned to my usual monotone demeanor.

" I think we'll be receiving new tasks in a bit. Shall we go?" I asked.

".....Hai...." She nodded her head despite looking downcast.

I released a sigh. Perhaps I'm being too harsh on her. She's currently experiencing a feeling that I was never able to understand, I don't know what it's like to lose a person who is close to me. I can't empathize with her desperation and yearning to avenge the one she lost.

"...For what it's worth, Horikita. I wish you all the best in achieving your goal, I will not stand in your way nor will I lend you a hand. If you truly wish to go through with this, then do everything you can but under no circumstances should you ever try to drag me into it. " I decided to tell her that at the very least.

She looked at me with an expression I wasn't too familiar with but it seems like a bit of the spark had returned in her eyes. That's good, if one wishes to gain what they desire the most, then one must be willing to do anything....EVERYTHING....to realize it.

Ding! Our phone simultaneously received a notification.

I checked my phone and already sighed at the task that was stated...

' Give a foot massage to one of your male classmates!

I despise this game.

It was currently 5 pm. The first round of the game is officially over and all students were instructed to return to their respective rooms to begin the discussion and voting. Both Horikita and I arrived at the classroom and it seems like we were one of the first few there.

" Ah, Horikita-san, Ayanokoji-kun. How were your tasks?" Hirata noticed our presence and immediately took the chance to ask us.

"Horrible." I stated as blunt as my monotone self could.

" Annoying." Horikita also answered. Seems like the old her has returned now that she's responding to Hirata. Even Hirata himself seemed delighted to see Horikita return to her old self, but didn't dare comment about it.

"Ahaha! It was the same for our group too. The director didn't hold back on us." Hirata said.

" I can't believe that psycho director tasked me with flirting to some middle aged employee! I cringed so hard...." I hear Karuizawa sharing her complaints to her friends and they also seemed grossed out by it.

At least you didn't have to massage another classmate's foot.... or wear a maid costume.....or wearing that godforsaken bunny ' outfit' and seeking another girl's comment.....

I'd say you got off easy, Karuizawa.

" What of Kushida-san? Does she have any clues as to who the other class murderers might be?" Horikita asked.

Hirata nods. " Yes, she told me she found some interesting information. But we'll have to wait for everyone to be present."

" I see..." Horikita nods and asks no further questions. She then immediately sat in her desk and I decided to do the same with mine.

For now, we just have to wait for everyone to gather.

The last duo finally arrived.....well....it should've been a duo...

" Sudo-kun? Where is Ike-kun?" Hirata asked.

"....Kanji got eliminated." He said.

Hm, figured much.

" Huh? But weren't you two together? " Hirata asked, and everyone also looked curious as to how Ike got eliminated when this plan was expected to eliminate the possibilities of any of us getting eliminated during the first round.

Sudo scratched his head nervously, he seemed unsure to speak of what exactly happened.

" Er....w-well....I'm not exactly sure if I should say this but.....ugh fuck it! He's not here so I'm free to spill, right?!" He bursted.

" Kanji's first task was to drink 10 liters of water in ONE sitting! He went through the whole day trying to hold his piss until he just couldn't do it no more! " Sudo said.

" Oh, so he gave up and went to the bathroom? Well, we can't really blame him-"

" No. He pissed his pants!" Sudo corrected.

....

.....

"....." Everyone was silent after what Sudo just said.

It seems like Ike was desperately trying to hold it in until the round ends, but failed miserably and....humiliated himself in public. How unfortunate.

There were different expressions on each of my classmates. Most of the boys tried to swallow their urge to laugh while most of the girls looked absolutely disgusted by it (Even though they were understanding enough but still) and the minority of students just stared at Sudo with a blank face.

Hirata coughs awkwardly, " A-And then?" He asked for Sudo to continue.

" W-Well after that, I just told him to go back to the dormitories and change his pants. I couldn't follow him at the time because I was in a middle of a task so we were separated and that's probably when he got eliminated...." Sudo said.

" Huh? How did you know he got eliminated if you were in the **middle of a task**?" Okitani asked, curiously.

Everyone looked at Okitani and then back to Sudo.

" Okitani-kun has a point there. How did you know? Didn't the director say that the eliminations would be announced after the round ends? In fact, it hasn't even been announced yet even though the round did end...." Matsushita said.

" Ah....well....I just assumed? Look, I was hella confused okay! I tried looking for him but I couldn't find him!" Sudo reasoned.

" So you're admitting to the fact that you aren't entirely sure that he'd been eliminated? Suspicious considering the way you described his elimination with confidence a while ago..." Yukimura narrowed his eyes.

This was bad for Sudo. He wasn't good with verbal arguments and so he couldn't really defend himself even if he were to tell the truth.

Somebody will have to step in-

" I don't think it's right to target Sudo-kun for Ike-kun's disappearance. Even if his timing was suspicious, it's completely reasonable to assume that Ike-kun was eliminated if he couldn't seem to find him. " Horikita interjected. Everyone was surprised to hear the previously silent Horikita speaking once more.

" Horikita...?" Sudo, who used to antagonize the girl, was shocked that she stood up for him at this very moment.

" Horikita-san is right." Hirata agreed, " Sudo is our classmate, is he not? What reason is there to suspect him of something? Personally, even if Sudo-kun is rough around the edges, he wouldn't betray our class or his friend." Hirata said with sure confidence.

"...well...if Hirata-kun believes that to be true, Then I won't argue." One of the girls said.

The rest of the girls nodded, and the boys soon followed and instantly stopped suspecting Sudo.

Sudo looked relieved and he gave a thankful look to Horikita. Everyone seemed to calm down until the speakers activated.

" Hello everyone!" Lumine's voice spoke through the intercom.

Everyone immediately stayed silent.

" I'm guessing that all of you are back to your respective classrooms. Sorry for the announcement delay, you see, I was too busy laughing at a certain person's tasks and lost track of time! HAHAHA! I should share it with you guys soon butttttt....anyways....back to the matter at hand." A pause followed, which left everyone nervous.

" We will begin with Class A. And those who were eliminated are.....none! Everyone is still in the game for Class A!" She happily announced.

Hm, so they did well with their strategy. Initially, I'd thought that our class would also end up with the same result but unfortunately it didn't. It was at the back of my head, but I assumed that during the first round, nobody would really try anything and the class murderers will remain inactive until they got information.

But it seems like one of the classes were opting for the first option or the second if they'd assumed that Ike was our class murderer. The reason doesn't matter but what does matter is the fact that one class murderer was ready to strike.

Could it be Class C? The conversation taken place between those two Class C girls stayed in my head for quite a while. From the small pieces of info I have on Ryuen, it's not exactly unsafe to assume that he wouldn't be the type of guy to pull such a move on the first day.

" And for Class B.....huh, also none!" Lumine said.

Class B as well? Hmm...seems like there are two classes that had found success with the strategy...

" Class C.....oh! Finally! Seems like there are eliminations this time. The ones eliminated are; Komiya, Sonoda, Oda, and Tokitou! Sheesh, one of the class murderers must have founded a great opportunity and killed these four off discreetly! Orrr....could it be that other class murderers had a hand in this too? Pretty strange that 4 class C students were taken out while A and B remained unscathed but oh well, moving on!" Lumine announced, everyone can noticed the excitement in her tone.

" Class D.....hm, only Ike was eliminated. Oh waitttt, HAHHAHAHAH! I just remembered! The story behind his elimination is FUCKING hilarious!" Lumine's laugh went through the intercom and it lasted for quite a while.

Everyone in Class D just sighed.

" Okay....okay I'm good." Lumine took a few deep breaths before speaking, **" Anyways, that's all for the announcement and-....oh? Ohhh? OHHHH???? "**

" Ladies and Gentlemen, I've just received news that Ike Kanji of Class D had passed away!"

" H-Huh?" Everyone in the room gasped.

" W-WHAT?!" Sudo shot up from his seat, his chair making a loud screech as his tall figure began trembling just a bit.

" I assume Class D is suprised but I'm sure this also goes to all the classes. You see, this is still a Death Game! It's VERY possible for a person to die. I never guaranteed that they'd be okay if they were eliminated!" Lumine happily spoke. " And that's all for now! Please vote wisely!"

And the intercom stopped....

" Guys....I don't think she's joking..." Yukimura spoke in a solemn tone.

" No. No I ain't believing this shit. " Sudo said through gritted teeth. His expression looked absolutely bitter.

" SHE HAS TO BE LYING! " Sudo yelled.

" She's not. The director may be a psychopath but she's not a liar." Horikita spoke suddenly.

Sudo gives Horikita a look of absolute disbelief.

" Why are you defending her? What makes you think she wouldn't lie? She doesn't even hesitate to kill!" He shot back.

Horikita stared him back.

" She's proven to have a twisted personality and part of that personality is her refusal to lie just like how she shot Yamauchi-kun even when she warned him of what happens to those who quit. I'm not trying to defend her, but it'll be a waste of time to seek for answers when it's already been given to you." Horikita said.

" Ike-kun is dead. That's the truth." She said in the bluntest tone she could use.

To think that Horikita would be convinced that the director is everything but a liar. She might be right but she must've been prepared to be proven wrong down the line since no sane person would try and defend a psycho or justify one good thing about them even when acknowledging all the bad things about them.

But Horikita knew this had to be said before someone like Sudo goes out of control due to his anger. If he aims his anger towards the director then there's a chance the director will kill him off without hesitation.

You made a good choice, Horikita.

By putting her credibility at risk for the long-term, she'd successfully saved Sudo from committing a grave mistake.

"I can't just....." Sudo's resolve began dimming and the slight aura of hesitation was radiating.

Hirata patted his shoulder.

" Sudo-kun....please calm down." He said in a soft voice.

" Hirata, do you believe Horikita too? That the director is no liar?" Sudo looked towards Hirata for his opinion.

" I don't. But Horikita-san seems confident and this be insensitive of me to say but she'd recently lost someone too. I'm sure that Horikita-san is feeling the same, if not, more anger and resentment towards the director than you do. " Hirata said.

Sudo's eyes widened as the realization hit him. It was true, after all, Horikita was told that her brother had died during his last exam due to the betrayal of his kouhai.

Sudo glances at Horikita before sighing and nodding to Hirata.

" Fine...." He surrendered.

" Listen, Sudo-kun. If you feel that you're disrespecting Ike-kun's death for not going against the director and choosing to sit down. Then please forget about that feeling since everyone here believes you're making the best choice....I want you to know that." Hirata said.

" All right.....Yeah....." Sudo nodded but personally, I don't think the words really reached him.

In fact, unbeknownst to all of them...

Sudo is....

Nevermind. There's no need for me to elaborate since it's of no importance to my goal.

" Anyways.....I believe we should begin discussing now. Everyone please gather around." Hirata called out to the rest.

Everyone got up from their seats and rearranged the tables and chairs to form one long table and we were back to our previous positions from yesterday. Except Ike's chair was empty and nobody seemed to want to sit down on it.

Either they did it to pay respects...

Or they were afraid of Sudo suddenly pummeling them to the ground if they were to take that spot.

" Kushida-san, please share to us the information you and your group have gathered." Hirata said.

" Okay." Kushida cleared her throat before speaking,

" We spotted an elimination taking place in one of the far routes of

the mall." She said.

" Really?" Everyone said in surprise.

" Continue." Yukimura said, immediately.

Kushida nodded. " But before the girls and I could try to get a clear profile off of them, they immediately ran away. The best we could was to identify the body and it was Tokitou-kun of Class C." She said.

" Are there any characteristics about the figure that you can tell us? Even if it's minor?" Yukimura pursued the matter.

" No, I'm sorry." Kushida frowned. " I really couldn't tell..."

" It's okay Kushida-chan, you tried your best!" The boys cheered her up.

....

.....

.....

" Ayanokoji-kun?" I snapped out of my zone and looked at Horikita.

" Hm?"

" You're wearing an intense expression...." She pointed out.

I am?

I slid a hand over my face and tried to relax my facial muscles.

" Why were you staring at me, Horikita?" I asked her.

" It was coincidental." Was all she said before focusing back on

the discussion.

Hmm...

There's something strange about Kushida.

This might sound far-fetch without evidence but...

It's possible that she may have been involved with Ike's elimination.

Director Lumine never stated that class murderers are unable to kill their own civilians.

But if that's the case, then why would Kushida hypothetically perform an act such as that against her own class? What benefit would she be given?

And why am I suspecting her like this when I have no clear evidence that it was her doing.....yet my instincts tell me otherwise.

After all the groups shared their information from today, we had agreed on voting on a random student from Class A. We opted with the process of elimination.

And it's highly likely that the other classes will do the same.

Students were free to do eat dinner at the cafeteria during the interval time between 6 pm and 6:30, the latter in which the votes will be announced. I retrieved my free dinner set and sat alone in a table.

I sighed. I feel pretty gloomy from having to sit alone in a table so far in the corner....

" May I sit here?" Horikita suddenly arrived with her free dinner set.

Why is she here? I wondered. But I decided to nod and let her sit there.

" I'm suprised to see you here." I comment.

" There's something I want to tell you in private." Horikita said.

I raised a brow at that.

Both Horikita and I muttered our thanks for the food before we began chowing down.

" What is it?" I asked after swallowing my first bite.

" Kushida-san is not a good person." She said.

" Hm?" I was intrigued now. What could Kushida have done to

have Horikita state that out of nowhere?

" Kushida and I attended the same junior high. She was the most popular girl in school who'd gotten along with everyone she met. She tried to befriend me but I obviously declined her friendship for it held no importance to me whatsoever." She said.

They attended the same school, huh....

" And then?" I urged her to continue as I began eating.

" During the last quarter of our school year, rumors began circulating about her. It was all related to one single event which involved the self-destruction of one class. Her class." She said.

" Back then, I didn't want to pay attention it all that much. But it was frequently discussed to the point where my mind was forced to register it all. From what I could recall, it started when Kushida began spreading the secrets of her own classmates. Her classmates, after having their secrets spilled, began targeting each other and the classroom was a complete mess. The secrets that were spilled that day contained each of their animosity to one another and this event managed to delay our graduation by a month." She said.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

" Why would Kushida do such a thing?" I asked her.

" I don't know. But it's best if you don't visualize her as an angel especially with the current circumstances. I trust that you will keep this to yourself, Ayanokoji-kun." She said before eating.

" And if I won't?"

" Then I will have made a blunder. That's the end of it." Was Horikita's reply. I wonder why she told me this and even trusted me with this type of information.

Still, if I consider my own instincts into the equation.....it also believes that Kushida may not be an all-out good person in this....

" You can trust me with it." I assured her.

" You're not going to question whether I'm lying or not?" She asked.

" There's no need for me to ask. I can tell that you're speaking what you believe is the truth, and besides.....I was already skeptical

of Kushida myself." I didn't say more than that.

Horikita nodded and accepted my answer before she continued eating.

Let's say that what Horikita told was the unadulterated truth. If Kushida were to do such a nasty thing that would lead to her own class's destruction, what is her motive in spilling the secrets?

To summarize: *What could have happened before that event?*

It seems to me that Horikita's knowledge regarding Kushida is limited to school rumors and substantial evidence like the delay of her graduation. But I need to know the context of it all, and the only person who knows that is Kushida herself, though I'd rather not risk asking her about it.

I have to find a way to prove Horikita's words for myself....

Once the clock hit 6:30, the votes were announced and the intercom activated once more.

" Hello everyone! The votes have been processed and I will now announce the chosen who are eliminated via voting! Class A has chosen to vote out Morofuji of Class C!" Lumine announced.

Right now, my classmates were relying on the hope that none of us will be voted out for this round. We already lost Ike, it'd be troublesome to lose one more this early in the game.

" Moving on to Class B. They've chosen to eliminattteeeeeee..."
She paused for suspense.

" Totsuka Yahiko of Class A!"

Class B and Class A, seems they've intentionally chosen to eliminate the not worth to mention students.

It was to be expected since it's still early in the game and nobody is really sure about the opposing class murderers. Kushida may have witnessed the murder taking place but couldn't profile the murderer themselves since they'd ran away.

Thinking about it now, I wonder if the other classes spotted similar situations....

Kushida couldn't have possibly been spotted due to her being instructed to not kill anyone in the first round.

That WAS the plan at least....

" And from Class C, they've chosen to eliminate....nobody? Huhu~ Interesting!"

" Wait, did we hear that right? Class C didn't eliminate anyone?" Yukimura asked.

" That's possible?"

" That would mean they wasted their chance!"

" That's good for us, right?"

My classmates looked relieved. Since Class C decided to eliminate no one for the first round, then Class D didn't lose anyone through voting elimination. They seem satisfied with the result.

It's a bizarre strategy of Class C. Ryuen must've been keen on the rules stated by the director and noticed that she didn't say anything regarding the possibility of choosing not to eliminate anyone through vote.

And since this confirms it, it also opens up another way for the traitor of the class. When everyone decides to vote for one student, the class traitor can simply leave a blank and nobody will be voted out.

This is completely valuable information that my classmates aren't responding on. Truly a waste.

" And last but certainly least, we have Class D! And they've decided to vote...their own CLASSMATE?! HAHAAHAHAHA! This is hilarious! They've chosen to eliminate Ijuin from the equation!" Lumine began laughing maniacally through the intercom.

My class's happy expressions immediately melted into one of horror as they began looking at each other, looking for someone to antagonize, searching for someone to blame.

" WHO DID IT?!" They all yelled at the same time.

" Who in the world....." I hear Horikita mutter to herself. Seems like she'd also been found completely stumped by this sudden reveal.

What kind of **fool** would do such a **reckless** thing.....

" H-hey, who decided to Ijuin out?!" Hondo asked.

" It's not me!" Miyamoto quickly answered.

" Ain't me either!" Sudo said.

" Didn't we agree to vote off Manabe from Class C? What the hell happened! " Yukimura looked frustrated.

" None of us did it! We followed exactly what Hirata-kun said!" Hirata's female admirers instantly pulls out their defensive card.

" G-guys....why me? WHY WOULD A PERSON FROM THIS CLASS VOTE ME?! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO ANYONE!" Ijuin yelled.

" C-Calm down, we'll try to figure things out!" His companin, Okiya, assured.

" Huh? Do anything to anyone? You were literally staring at my boobs when we partnered up, you pervert!" Someone openly said.

Everyone looked towards the person who said it. The accuser was Hasabe Haruka, a girl with waist-length blue hair and orange colored eyes. She was highly attractive and she had....bust.

" H-Huh? H-Hasebe-san?!" Ijuin seemed shock by her words. (**btw, i corrected the feminine looking boy description I gave to Ijuin. I confused him with Okitani so my bad.**)

" Huh? Is that true?" The girls looked towards Ijuin with newfound disgust.

" W-wait i-it's not-"

" It's absolutely true! I can't believe I was partnered with you for the first round! You creep!" Hasebe was insistent. Her anger seemed genuine.

" H-Hasebe-san, please calm down-" Kushida tried to appease Hasebe's fury butthe effort bore no fruit as Hasebe gained the support from the other girls.

" That's so disgusting!"

" Seriously? he's being a pervert at this time?"

" He deserved to be eliminated! I feel sorry for Hasebe-san!"

They were all on Hasebe's side and targeted Ijuin.

" Hey dude, is that true?!" Okiya asked.

" N-No, I swear-"

" If it's true then we can't back you up man...." Okiya added.

"...." Ijuin grits his teeth in frustration and glares at Hasebe.

Hasebe scoffs. " I'm glad that someone decided to vote you out since they probably shared the same opinion as me." She said with crossed arms.

" YOU FUCKING BITCH!" Ijuin was losing control as he began

rushing towards Hasebe but was quickly stopped by Sudo and a few other boys.

" WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?! YOU'RE BASICALLY ADMITTING TO IT-" Okiya tried to snap his friend out of it but Ijuin simply laughed.

" I DID! I DID STARE AT HER HUGE FUCKING BREASTS BUT HOW COULD I NOT? HER BODY WAS BUILT WITH THE INTENTION OF HER BECOMING A HOE IN THE FUTURE ONE WAY OR ANOTHER!" He laughed and everyone was shocked by his words.

Those were his thoughts. And he confessed to them.

" HOW DARE YOU SAY THA-" The girls were about to angrily retort until a knock was heard from the door and in came Director Lumine herself.

" Hello! I'm here to collect Ijuin since you guys eliminated him!" Lumine announced loudly.

The girls visibly smiled at that and pointed towards Ijuin.

" Take that fat pervert away from us!" They said.

" Sheesh! Such animosity! And none of the boys seem to be backing him up either." She observed our class with an unreadable smile.

Her eyes then landed on me.

But quickly averted them soon after and clapped her hands in an excited manner.

" Very well! Come with me, Ijuin." She called out to the chubby boy.

The boys let go of their grip on Ijuin and pushed him towards the direction of Lumine. Ijuin stumbled a bit before looking at the boys with a look of contempt.

" You all are trash-" Ijuin tried to say but Lumine quickly shocked

him with a taser and everyone stepped back in shock.

Thud! Ijuin's body fell on the floor completely subdued.

" Sorry~ I do not wish to waste more time! It was a fun show, though! Anyways..." Lumine snaps her finger. " Pick him up, my dear lackeys!"

Hooded figures stepped in the room and quickly took away Ijuin. Lumine waved goodbye at us and followed the hooded figures of the classroom, leaving us in shocked silence.

Today didn't work out.

We lost two people.

To be precise, my worst expectations came to light.

This plan was a failure for Class D. And the Class that had suffered the most loss in the first round...is Class D.

Still, there was a possibility that our plan could've worked....if it weren't due to such **recklessness** exhibited by one of us.....

Whoever voted Ijuin out was well aware of the consequences or perhaps the lack thereof. And now my classmates are completely sullen by this realization.

Class C may have lost 4 people...

But I can say with absolute certainty...

That Class D lost this round.

I stood inside the elevator, pressing the button and then closing the doors.

A thought struck upon me as I soaked in the absolute relief and silence.

How did Ike die?

How come the class C students were simply listed as 'eliminated' rather than dead?

A few things weren't adding up. Even if this WAS a death game, I doubt any of the class murderers expected there to be any actual death in this game in hindsight. I highly doubt that any one of them had the intention to kill another student.

Otherwise, what's their motive in killing Ike?

I sighed. Perhaps I shouldn't try delve into this topic any further.

It's against my own personal goal in this school which is to live peacefully despite these suprising conditions...

I entered my room and closed the door.

But then I froze on the spot as my gaze went towards the figure who stood there staring at the window.

" Oh. You're finally here." She spoke and turned around. I was instantly met with her golden colored eyes, matching the shine of a star.

Why is she here?

I immediately put up my guard as she took a step towards me with that same smile.

" Why aren't you doing anything interesting, **Masterpiece?**"

I was correct. She does have information regarding my past.

How irritating.

" I don't know what you mean. And how in the world did you get in my room-"

She pulls out a duplicate key.

" I see..." I said. I already guessed that was the case but I needed to ascertain her intentions of being here or at the very least, lead the conversation away from the topic about my past.

" I was delighted to find a student like YOU ending up in my school. Your past holds some mystery but I have no intentions of diving into it. Rather, I'm more curious as to why you're not doing anything!" She pouted, she feigned disappointment.

She was enjoying this situation, wasn't she?

She could sense my unease.

" I'm doing everything I can to help out my class. So I don't see any reason as to why you think I'm doing nothing-"

" No you're not. You don't give a single damn about your class. You don't give a single DAMN about anyone!" Her eyes showed a deep understanding. It was an uncomfortable gaze to say the least.

She took another step closer.

" You're just like me!" She smiles. " We're both not right in the head! "

"...You're a psycho." I told her.

" And you're a **monster**." She replied.

" Or should I refer to you as ' **Demon**'? That's what your folks like to nickname you back at your place, right?" She laughs.

" ..." I kept silent and tried to think of a way to get this woman out of my room before anything bad happens.

" It's just the first game. What am I suppose to do in a game I'm not familiar with? Everything in this school is a first for me." I decided to lie.

" Hm. perhaps you're right. However, you've already thought of a strategy to win in the back of your head, right? " She said in a tone full of mischief.

" You just lack the motivation to implement! " She said it as if it were the solution to a math problem.

" Stop making baseless assumptions-"

" Oh dear, my assumptions are anything but BASELESS. Let's get that fact straight, yeah?" Her eyes darkened.

She was serious.

Eventually the light returned in her eyes in a matter of seconds.

" So how about I provide you with that motivation! If you win this game, regardless of the route you take. I'll let you in on a special reward~" She winks.

" I have no interest-"

" Trust me on this one. You're going to love this reward, Aya-no-ko-ji-kun " She played with my syllables.

I pondered on what she said.

A 'reward' I'd like? I have an idea of what it could possibly be but....it feels unlikely that she'd be able to meet my expectations.

Then again, I know nothing of this woman nor how much power she holds. If she was able to control this school and turn it into her little playground entertainment show.....then I wonder if she also holds power outside of this school.

If I agree to win this game, then I'd be throwing away the persona I'm trying to develop as a student.

I'd be throwing away my opportunity of being seen as 'normal' by others...

" Well. It's your choice! I just wanted to put that suggestion out there." She interrupted my thoughts as she stood up from the bed and began walking past me.

" Whether or not you accept my offer is none of my concern. I just want to find excitement in this school and I thought that you'd be able to do just that. However, if you're not up for it then I can just rely on the other victims to make up for it until you do." She said with confidence.

But out of nowhere, I grabbed her wrist, spun her around, and pinned her on the wall.

"Woah!" She looked like she barely registered what had just happened but then her eyes meet mine and she smiles. "What do you want?"

"I have two questions I'd like to be answered." I said to her.

"Then in exchange for my answers, will you agree to try and win?" She asked.

I simply gave her a look that pierced through the very depths of her soul. When most would tremble under this type of gaze, she simply smiled in both excitement and understanding.

"Very well,"

Her eyes began to reflect my gaze.

" Ask away~"

CHAPTER END!

Kiyotaka will now have the full intention to win during the next episode!

Nothing is more motivating than the promise of a special reward by the director. And with his curiosity of her usability, he shan't miss the chance!

SadisticLumine, out~

Episode 5: Days...and days.....until...?

Ayanokoji PoV

It's been days.....

This game is currently at its 6th round.

Humiliation, embarrassment, anger, misery....all these emotions were felt because of these tasks and acts of betrayal.

Right now, my class is in shambles.....or is an exaggeration on my end. Well, I guess to be more precise, we currently have no sense of direction but Hirata and Kushida is currently trying their best to keep us together. They are the two pillars of Class D but if one crumbles then it's all over for us.

I was currently in my room, pondering on what to do. There's been a few sightings of possible class murderers but each time, they were said to be silhouettes and that they couldn't get a clear picture.

The other classes are doing an extravagant job in protecting their class murderer's identity. I have theories as to who the murderers are but I can't rush with haste. After all, the plan I came up with is only good for one shot....one moment....and if I'm wrong then I will have failed.

I finished writing down the names of the people eliminated until now.

I held my notebook and read over the many names, making sure that everyone was taken in account of.

' Class A - (Eliminated via vote) Totsuka, Sakayanagi, Motodoi, Rokkaku, Tamiya

(Eliminated by class murderer) Nishikawa, Kamuro, Tsukaji, Nakajima

(Died)

There is no clear leader in Class A but there are two factions. The Sakayanagi faction and the Katsuragi faction. I've yet to predict who'd win in this internal class battle since I'm focused on my own goals for now. '

A total of 8 Class A students have been eliminated from the game. Leaving their class with 32 students remaining, and for the past games, Class C has been targeting Class A for some unknown reason

while Class B remained neutral and voted students from different classes each day. As for my own class, we're currently operating like headless chickens, we couldn't seem to agree on anything except to vote for nobody.

I sighed. They could've at least voted anyone random from the opposing classes. That way, it could narrow things down for me just a bit and make everything easier to accomplish.

Why am I lumped in with such a defective class....

I gripped my pen tightly as I thought that.

" Stay calm....." I told myself as I began taking deep breaths.

It's no use getting frustrated by their actions, still it's a rare occurrence for me to feel that type of emotion towards anything or anyone....

Perhaps it's my 'eagerness' speaking towards that special reward that the director began taunting me with. I want to see if she could truly grant one of my rare desires, a desire I've sought, a temporary desire in which I'm living currently. I wonder if she can turn 'temporary' to 'permanent'.

I'll discover what it is, once I win this game. I will do whatever it takes in pursuing victory, hopefully just this once.

"I better get going." I said aloud as I checked the time on my clock.

I straightened my uniform once more before grabbing my school bag and exiting my room.

Round 6 will begin soon.

I took my seat in the classroom and observed my classmate's faces out of habit. They still didn't look all too happy. I decided to take out my notebook and continued where I left off while I wait for the round to begin.

' Class B - (Eliminated via vote) Watanabe, Beppu, Sumida, Moriyama, Yonezu

(Eliminated by class murderer) Nakanishi, Asako,

(Dead)

Something peculiar about Class B is the fact that only two were eliminated via Class Murderer. They've also experienced no actual deaths in their class, and Class B has been targeted by Class A in voting elimination in an attempt to cause panic for the former, but suprisingly enough, Class B did well in maintaining their morale. Class A must be frustrated with them. '

Ichinose is the leader of Class B and she's publicly shown her natural charm when it comes to uniting people of her class. She's a natural born leader with a good sense of direction...

However.....

Will Ichinose be able to keep that same mentality in a situation that involves life and death? Her class may be fine now, but in my calculations, they wouldn't very last long if they opt with this same approach or decided to stay under Ichinose's leadership.

....

One other thing to note regarding Ichinose....is...

There's a look in her eyes. A look I managed to witness 2 days ago when I was doing my tasks and I coincidentally ended up meeting her alone. We talked for a bit regarding how the general situation is going on in our respective classrooms but then we suddenly heard a yell from one of the corners of the mall...

That's when we began sprinting towards that place at full speed (I held back so Ichinose could catch up) and ended up seeing another silhouette running away from the scene. When she saw the lying corpse of the student victim, expression morphed into one of shock and worry like it should....however...

For a split moment, her eyes glistened with familiarity.....and a small grin formed on her lips.

I'm not sure if that was simply my own imagination at the time, but it's still worth noting in case anything similar to that happens again in the future then I already have my reference ready.

Onto Class C....

' Class C - (Eliminated via vote) Morofuji, Manabe, Yamashita, Yabu, Suzuki

(Eliminated by class murderer) - Komiya, Sonoda, Oda, Tokitou

(Dead) -

Class C lost 4 students during the first round, but at present date they've lost a total of 9 students equivalent to the 9 students that Class A lost. Though, no Class C members were murdered after the first game. A class full of mystery with Ryuen Kakeru leading it, though I haven't seen him at all through the many days that had passed (it makes me wonder if he's even doing his tasks). '

Hmm...I've been thinking about it for a while....perhaps Ryuen is Class C's murderer? There were no reports of his appearance ever since the game began. Not even Kushida, who was tasked to scout every possible student, could find him.

What is his plan....

His lack of appearances leads me to assume that he might be the murderer all along. But why would Ryuen pull such an obvious act? Wouldn't Class A or Class B will have eliminated him by now if he continued whatever scheme he's plotting behind the scenes? I'm sure B or A have considered suspecting Ryuen but neither side made a move to act on their suspicions.

That's why....

Today, I will go search for him myself...

' Convince a classmate to vote for the wrong person!'

What a strange task. It's neither embarrassing nor time-consuming....rather it seems easy. Unfortunately, I'm going to have to ignore this task for the time being. I have a goal today and that is to find out Ryuen's whereabouts and evaluate him myself if whether or not he's Class C's murderer.

As I wandered through the mall, looking at my phone, pretending to 'search' for my task around the mall, I noticed that after 5 days everyone had completely abandoned the defensive strategy that had been used on the first day. It was to be expected since it really limited how much they can do offensively, one slip-up and it could cause an elimination.

Or in our case.....**death.**

At the thought of death, I began to recall the first question I asked Lumine the other night....

" How did Ike die?" I asked her.

She tilts her head at me and smiles, " Do I really need to answer that? Don't you already have an idea on how he died?" She shot back the question.

" Answer." I needed to hear it from her mouth.

" Okay~" She sighs.

" The class murderer decided to shoot the chest sensor..."

She confirmed my hidden suspicion that night. It suprised me why the director felt the need to add two sensors in this game, one belonging to the head, and the other to the chest. It felt completely unnecessary unless there's a certain difference between the sensors....

And that certain difference is the effect of the shock.

If the murderer decided to shoot the head sensor, then it will cause a shock to enter the victim's brain and forcefully shut down their body, leading them to fall unconscious. While it does have its possible after-effects like loss of memory, frequent headache, trouble with brain recognition , and whatnot. There's also a high possibility of it being completely harmless and simply causing the person to fall unconscious for a period of time.

The chest sensor however....

It sends a shock that goes straight to the heart. It will also forcefully move blood clots to certain parts of the body which can cause life-threatening complications like a stroke or the blood clot traveling to your lungs. Even if the latter does not happen, there's another main issue about being shocked to the chest.

A strong enough shock to the heart can cause it to stop completely.

The director is a psychotic woman, so there's no room for doubt that she would install a very high voltage rate in the provided guns for the murderers with the intention to **kill** if ever they decide to shoot the victim's chest sensor. So either the person who shot Ike was left in complete shock for having killed another person.....or.....it was planned from the beginning.

Director Lumine said another interesting statement during our talk, when I was trying to convince her that I wasn't anything worth watching out for.

" Whether or not you accept my offer is none of my concern. I just want to find excitement in this school and I thought that you'd be able to just that. However, if you're not up for it then I can just rely on the other victims to make up for it until you do!"

Those were her words.

Lumine has stated a few times that she speaks no lies. She's also

proven on multiple occasions where she shows no hesitation on enforcing her rules, even going so far to kill others to prove her point.

Now, if I were to take that into consideration then that leads me to one question...

Are there others who also have interesting backgrounds?

Others who have unusual motives?

If so, then what would they do in a game like this....

So many possibilities..

Well, it's not like I have to rely on where Ryuen will appear. Rather, I should focus on the people that Class C's murderer will attack and I have a guess on who that might be...

I've recognized the names of those in my year thanks to the voting elimination process which provided us with their name and picture.

So whoever enters this spot, I will have already identified the victim and the murderer all in one swoop.

As if on cue, a student entered my view walking around and gazing at his phone as if reading his task. I waited patiently because this was my chance, I made sure to hid myself carefully in the shadows and muted my phone notifications.

A minute later, another student entered my view and my eyes immediately narrowed at the familiar magenta colored hair and evil grin.

Bingo.

" Ryuuen-san.....are you sure this won't kill me?" The worried Class C ' victim' asked his soon to be killer.

" Don't worry so much, Yoshimoto. " Ryuuen pulls out his gun and aims it at the chest sensor.

" We're going to win." he said with a confident grin while Yoshimoto sighed reluctantly.

He was still clearly unsure and not too trusting of Ryuuen's methods.....but he has no choice. If he goes back ' alive' then his classmates will probably yell at him for not following the plan. I wonder what I should do next? Should I step in before Ryuuen shoots or should I step in during the aftermath.

I think the latter will benefit me better.

SHOCK

Thud! Yoshimoto's body went limp and fell unconscious soon after the shot.

" Heh. Everything is going according to pla-"

" Plan?" I finished for him as I stepped out of the shadows.

He turns around quickly and looks at me.

" What the hell? So you were here the entire time?" He said, sounding completely taken off-guard.

" So you're the murderer, Ryuen." I watched as his eyes widened in realization that I'd caught him in the act.

" I had a feeling it was you. I just needed to confirm it." I told him.

" How long were you waiting here....." Ryuen wore a grin to hide his unease.

He chose not to run since running will have been pointless to do when he'd already been caught. The best he could do is secrete any info from me as much as he can before going down completely...

Well, that would've been the case if he were an ordinary citizen, in which case, he was not.

" Ever since the round began. I decided to settle in this spot since I had guessed that the murder will take place here." I glanced at our location before facing him again. " After all, this is the only spot where a murder hasn't taken place."

" Is that all it took for you to determine I'd pop up here?" Ryuen asked.

" That, and the fact that I've been studying the murderer's movements. I am well aware that this isn't the only place where a murder hasn't been reported. " I said.

" Then how did you know? I refuse to believe it's luck." He

seemed amused now. Clearly interested in how he got found out so suddenly.

" You often pick the spots that are farther than the previous ones. Yesterday, you eliminated someone from the north wing of the wall, the two days before that, you murdered them at the west wing and east wing. Completely opposite sides. That's why I ended up at the south wing and guessed that this would be the most likely spot out of all the other dark corners in the south wing," I explained.

He was silent.

" Thinking of killing your own teammates is quite the outside of box thinking, especially with the many risks that accompany the players during this first game. But you failed to act like an ordinary citizen yourself by not appearing in the public eye. " I was impressed with how far he'd gotten....

" Kuku....you caught me." He looks at me with a sharp glare. " Your name is Ayanokoji, right? I recognize your boring face from the voting elimination process. "

That hurt a bit. Being called ' boring' when this is just my resting face...

" But just because you found me out....you think you've won?"

" Hm?"

He smiles at me and my calm feeling slowly faded as it began detecting something else.

" Ryuen-kun is the murderer?!" I heard a shriek from my left, the exit of this dark corner.

I looked towards that direction and found Kushida staring at us with a shocked expression. Another witness, it seems.....but I still felt off about this. Why is that?

" Ayanokoji-kun!" Kushida ran to my side and looked between me and Ryuen. " Is it-"

" Yes, he caught me."Ryuen said, shrugging. " Bastard was camping here, waiting for me to pop out. I got played completely." He said, feigning disappointment.

" Eh? T-This is good!!" Kushida's face lit up as she began looking to me. " We can tell the others and things will get better!" She said in an excited tone.

" Kushida-" I tried to stop her but then we all received a notification.

The round has ended....

Kushida was currently explaining the events to our classmates while I sat in my seat, pondering silence. This uncomfortable feeling still hasn't dispersed, rather it only kept accumulating deep inside me, ringing in my head with warning bells to do something.

But what? What am I supposed to do?

I sighed to myself.

" Is something wrong?" Horikita asked me. Is that concern I hear in her tone? Ah, doesn't matter.

" No. I'm just tired of this game." I lied (sort of).

" I'm sure all of us share that sentiment, however, " She sighs in

relief. " At the very least, you and Kushida-san managed to identify Ryuen as Class C's murderer. That's a great boost of morale for Class D, don't you think?" She said.

....

" Sure." was all I replied.

Hirata clapped his hands and asked for everyone's attention.

" All right, everyone! It's time to vote. You know who to vote for, right?" Hirata asked.

Everyone nodded.

Keisei gave a look towards his classmates. " Make sure to double check, triple check, or quadruple-check to make SURE that you voted for the right person. " he instructed out of anxiety.

" We got this!" The boys said.

" Stop worrying so much!" The girls also responded.

" I can't help but worry....especially in the situation we are now..."
I hear Keisei mutter under his breath.

The voting papers were divided and handed to us in rows. As soon as I received my own, I grabbed my pen, and gazed at the blank sheet. I released another sigh before lifting my pen, twirling it with my fingers out of habit, before beginning to write my vote.

Why was I worried?

I've made the right decision. I'm confident about that.

Ryuen PoV

(6:25, five minutes before eliminations via voting announcement...)

" Ryuen-san....is it really time?" Ishizaki asked me.

I smirked. " Yep. Those Class D monkeys will vote me out soon. It's guaranteed." I said.

" I can't believe your plan is woking.....tch..." A girl with a tomboyish appearance, Ibuki, seemed to scoff. Hidden deep beyond her rough, lone wolf attitude....she's fragile and weak.

She's not a wolf. She's just another lamb following its Shepherd.

" BOSS WE WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN." A huge dark-colored man spoke to me with the intention to assure me.

" I know you won't, Albert." I then glanced at Ishizaki. " But please beat up Ishizaki for me if he does something stupid.

" H-Hey! I swear I won't do anything stupid!" Ishizaki said with desperation.

" But stupidity seems to follow you wherever you go, Ishizaki." Ibuki comments.

" Geez, give me a break, will you?!" Ishizaki complained.

" Ryuen-san." A new voice entered our conversation. I looked towards the boy with glasses and nodded.

" Right, Here you go." I handed the gun to its rightful **class murderer**.

" I'm guessing they're finally going to take the bait?" Kaneda says

as he takes the gun.

" Yep. Now all you need to do is to eliminate Hirata, Amikura, Kanzaki, and Hashimoto during the next round. Got it?" I said.

" Understood." he nods.

I looked towards the rest of my classmates who instantly returned my gaze with still expressions.

" Congrats to you all." I clapped. " We're one step closer to winning this entire game. That Katsuragi from Class A can't do shit and Class B is making it WAYYY too obvious on who their murderer is. Heh. What a joke." I snorted in amusement.

My classmates nodded quietly. I worked hard in having them be obedient just like this.....nah, who am I kidding? Kuku! It was so EASY for me to forcefully take their loyalty through a tactic called ' fear'. The moment I finally got Albert on my side, everyone else was doomed to follow.

I relaxed in my seat, stretching my legs and placing them on the table as I leaned back and relished the feeling of relaxation after securing guaranteed victory.

I've already fooled Class A and B into suspecting me as the murderer but they only stopped there and refused to move further than suspicions. Class D , however, was easy prey into falling for my trap and voting me out thinking that I was the murderer. They

must look like confident clowns, silently celebrating their first 'win' in this entire game by eliminating who they believe is our class's murderer.

After all, they desperately need a boost to their morale. Everyone can see just how depressing their faces look as they complete their daily tasks barely keeping themselves together from crumbling. Hah, a shame that I won't be able to bear witness to their shocked faces when it is announced that no class murderers had been caught.

That Ayanokoji guy....he seemed proud at first, explaining all the missing points in my plan but he was blind to the bigger picture. What a **fool**.

And then their class angel came and sealed the deal. I'm so fucking giddy right now for what is about to happen....

" **Hello everyone! I'm ready to announce the results!"** The intercom activated we all heard her voice.

All of us waited in silence...

" **Let's begin with Class A! They've chosen to vote out Kinoshita of Class C!"**

Tsk tsk, that Katsuragi is shooting blindly. A pathetic act of desperation.

" And Class B has ultimately decided to vote no one!"

Blegh. Boring as usual, huh.

" As for Class C, they've decided to vote out Takemoto of Class A."

Might as well strike back, no?

" It's game over for Class-"

" And Class D has decided to vote out Hirata Yousuke!"

"D-....huh?" My mouth stayed agape as I began to register the director's words.

" THEY VOTED HIRATA?!" My classmates exclaimed in shock.

" H-Huh? W-Wait, Ryuuuen-san was wrong?!"

" T-There's n-no way they would've known!"

" That's too insane to believe in! And they voted Hirata of all people?!"

I didn't mishear that?

Did those monkeys seriously.....no...

I clenched my fist.

This is the act of a traitor.....

A traitor that has not only decided to vote out their own classmate, but they also decided to vote out a person with extremely high credibility and trust...

Tch.....they got me.

The traitor in Class D is one **annoying bastard...**

Ayanokoji PoV

I made the right choice...

I've thought about it...I've thought of the possibilities like you have, Ryuen. I, too, had thought of the idea of having our class murderer assigning someone else to do the killing for them.

Even so, admittedly, I was quite close to being fooled by you.

I've gotten rusty. But fortunately enough, the unusual task that I had basically chosen to ignore the whole day was my hint into discovering your true intentions. While my class may have lost class points due to such an act, it is too trivial for me to worry about in the end. They'll be too distracted to notice.

I decided to vote out Hirata.

And now I silently watch my class crumble...

" WHO VOTED HIRATA-KUN?!"

" HEY! WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?! I THOUGHT WE WERE ALL IN AGREEMENT TO VOTE OUT RYUEN?!"

" THERE'S A TRAITOR IN OUR CLASS!"

" BUT WHO?!"

" IT HAS TO BE ONE OF THE BOYS! " One of the girls pointed at the boys. " THEY'RE JEALOUS OF HIRATA-KUN'S LOOKS AND THEY DECIDED TO VOTE HIM BECAUSE OF IT!"

" G-girls-" Hirata tried to calm them down but the boys glared at my female classmates.

" DO YOU THINK WE CARE ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW? WE'RE TRYING TO SURVIVE HERE AND YOU THINK WE GIVE A SHIT ABOUT HIS STUPID LOOKS?" They told the girls as if they were

lunatics.

" NOT JUST THAT! YOU'RE PROBABLY MAD BECAUSE WE DECIDED TO SACRIFICE SOME OF YOU DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS IN THE VOTING ELIMINATIONS!" The girls replied.

That's right....

I glanced to the boys side and noticed most of our ' key' players had been eliminated from the game. The girls suggested it a few days ago and the boys tried to argue back but eventually settled on it despite the bitterness between the two genders. This ' plan' from the girls had played a major part in Class D's destruction.

Everyone in this class is selfish.

That what I've come to realize and I exploited that clear flaw today.

" THAT SHIT YOU PULLED WAS STILL UNFAIR!" Sudo barked.

" WHY COULDN'T WE SACRIFICE ANY OF YOU, HUH? AFTER ALL, YOUR WHOLE ENTIRE ROLE IS TO GUARD KUSHIDA BUT THAT PLAN HAD ALREADY BEEN LONG ABANDONED!" Miyamoto said angrily.

" WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO IMPLY?" Karuizawa glares.

" YOU GIRLS ARE USELESS AS FUCK!" Hondo answered for the boys side.

The girls wore offended expressions and the situation only escalated further. Hirata looked between the two sides, his words keep getting overwhelmed by each side's retorts, insults, and argument. From what I can tell by Hirata's troubled expression and darkening eyes, I knew he was finally going to break.

" WILL ALL OF YOU SHUT UP FOR ONCE AND LET ME FUCKING TALK!!!" He yelled as his usually kind expression morphed into one of sheer anger and disappointment.

The boys stopped talking, they were caught off-guard by Hirata's new side. The girls also looked at him in shock.

" H-Hirata-kun-" Karuizawa tried to speak to her boyfriend but Hirata silenced her with one glare.

" Shut up." He said to her. And thus, she closed her mouth and slowly inched back.

" All of you...." He gazed at us all, " Are so goddamn loud....."

" For once.....shut up....just....shut up...." He said

And the class fell to silence...

I voted Hirata out for an entirely different reason, but this was an interesting development to see him seemingly sound and feel like an entirely different person. A person that has had enough of his class's mistakes and misunderstandings.

It is never recommended to waste a kind man's patience...

" Look....I get it." He began speaking,

" We're all stressed. And there's a traitor in our class. They decided to vote me out and they did it because this is exactly how all of you would act. You'll act careless and blame each other....you'll end up giving the traitor a bigger chance in winning through the third option the director has stated. That's why..." His gaze relaxed.

His ' scary' aura disappeared and the atmosphere felt warm again as he smiled kindly towards us.

" Please....stop fighting. Work together, even if we've lost so many people....even if two of our classmates had died, I want us to work together. As a class with the odds not in our favor....working together is our only hope." he seemingly pleaded and then bowed.

"Please....think carefully from now on. Choose your words wisely." he said.

Both sides, the boys and the girls looked at each other. Guilty expressions were worn on their faces as they gazed back at Hirata. They realized the bigger picture even if it seemed too late.

"...." But none of them voiced out their apologies just yet. The feeling of self pride still resides within them, their minds subconsciously convincing them that they were in the right and the other side was in the wrong.

Hirata's words may have reached them. But it didn't quite engrave into their minds just yet.

The door slid open and Director Lumine had just walked in. She smiled as she gazed at the state my classmates were in and whistled to get everyone's attention.

"What's with the silence, everyone?" She asked, though I suspect she already knew what happened. She's a woman who knows everything that goes on in this place no matter how hard we try to be discreet.

Indeed, a troublesome individual...

"Hm? No one's going to answer?" She sighs. "All right~ Anyways, Hirata, are you ready?" She asked the man I decided to vote out.

"Everyone. I'll be counting on you." Hirata stopped bowing and gave one last encouraging smile before following Lumine....

" He's right.....we really are noisy." One of the boys, Keisei, spoke.

(Fuck this. Imma just call him Keisei since I'm way too used to writing Keisei instead of Yukimura.)

He looked towards everyone. " We always talk over each other, even during the first day. I'm sure it was still pressuring for us to work together and honestly it really annoyed me that I'd been placed in a class with you all." he said in an honest tone.

" But I realized that I'm not really helping much either." Keisei sighs. " All I'm good at is academics and logic. Despite that, I'm still pretty useless in a scenario like this. This game has no interest in testing my academics simply because academics have zero application.....I was too full of myself." he said.

".....Ugh, fine..." Sudo sighs, " I'm useless here too. I was just in denial. I'm probably the dumbest in the class about everything that's not sports-related. That's why....I.....sorry about what I said." he directed it to the girls.

" No, we're sorry too..." Karuizawa spoke, showing guilt instead of pride for once. " We.....well...I...was selfish. Since round 1, I've always shown it on display, right? Even now, I still think for myself and not of others.....I'm sorry for saying all those mean things and

for acting selfish..." She said.

I glanced to my seatmate. She looks genuinely surprised at the sincerity displayed by both sides.....

" Ah....nah....what I said about you girls being useless....that was out of line. You guys did your best....I mean...they never found out Kushida-chan was our killer, right?" Hondo scratched his head awkwardly.

" Mhm! You girls did great, seriously!" Kushida took this as a chance to assert control.

" But Kushida-san.....erm....well, I'm sorry to the boys too." A girl with brown hair and a unique fang , Sato Maya, had also apologized.

" Everyone....let's use the last 30 minutes of our time and talk. Let's just talk and share our frustrations and then work harder tomorrow." Kushida suggested.

" I want each and every one of us to get along with one another! To understand each other and then rise through the ranks. I want to reach Class A with you all!"Kushida cheered.

The boys and girls gave warm smiles towards the bright person

that is Kushida and nodded, agreeing to take Kushida's suggestion.

" We'll grab the chairs." The girls said.

" We'll arrange the tables." The boys said soon after.

Incredible. Even when one of our pillars fell down.....even when I expected my class to crumble. One person opted to build it back up, and with that, the others followed and slowly tried to build back up our trust in one another. To them, at this very moment, they're pretending that the traitor does not exist as to focus on rebuilding their morale for tomorrow.

Such a pity....

I'm sure that once tomorrow comes....

I'll be exiled by their circle of trust....

My chances of friendship with them will diminish...

They'll scorn me and look towards me with shock that will gradually turn to hate.

After all,

I'm the class traitor...

CHAPTER END!

The game will finally end tomorrow.

Kiyotaka is currently at the edge of the cliff, and all he has to do is to jump in the pit of victory.

And a new pov achieved with Ryuen's pov! Poggers!

SadisticLumine, out~

Episode 6: The traitor is none other than Ayanokoji Kiyotaka!

??? PoV

" Nagumo, have you heard? The first years are almost finished with their game." I called out to my blonde classmate.

"...Hm..." He hummed softly in response.

" What do you think will be the outcome of their game?" I asked, curiously.

His blue eyes kept gazing at the tea cup he was holding. He then lifted it towards his lips and silently sipped before placing the cup down and finally looking me in the eyes.

*" The traitor will win through the **secret**....that's all I can say..." he spoke before standing up and leaving the room.*

I looked back at his distancing figure....

Nagumo Miyabi is a classmate of mine. He once was a person with a huge ego but now it's been dissipated to nothing. He once spoke loudly to draw others in, but now he speaks quietly to avoid unnecessary matters. The light in his eyes used to be filled with interest and excitement, this entire school was his playground at one point, he had the whole entire year under his control.

But now, it's blank. Nagumo Miyabi has changed....everything that I once associated with him with for most of my first year.....it's all gone. It's like this is an entirely different person and everyone in my grade.....well....everyone who's still alive can tell.

Everything about him feels uncertain but there is one trait that has stuck with him....ever since I met him.

*Nagumo Miyabi is not someone you want to make an **enemy** out of....*

Ayanokoji PoV

Today, I was roaming around the mall with Kushida to complete our tasks.

" I'm suprised that you wanted to partner with me, Ayanokoji-

kun. But I'm delighted nonetheless!" She said in her usual chipper tone.

" I'm glad you didn't find me a bother." I replied in my usual monotone.

" Eh? Why would I? Also, may I ask the reason why you decided to partner with me?" She tilts her head curiously at me as we walked.

" Hm, no particular reason....." I said.

" Eh? Are you sure~?" She gave me a playful look as if to tease me. Well, I did have a reason in deciding to partner up with her but I can't tell her that now.

" You caught me. " I raised my hands in playful surrender.

" I just wanted to get to know you a little better." Not a complete lie.

" Oh? Okay then! I'm always willing to open myself up to others, though, can I expect Ayanokoji-kun to reciprocate the same?" She asked.

" I'll do my best." I told her and she nodded in satisfaction.

" Anyways, if I may ask, what is Ayanokoji-kun's current task?" She asked.

" I have to dance with a beautiful girl by the fountain." I sighed.

Yep....this was one of the reasons why I picked Kushida...

" Eh? Um....." Kushida's face turned for some reason. She began stuttering with the following words.

" R-Really? Is that a joke?" She asked, not meaning to sound offensive.

" Unfortunately, it's not." I replied.

"....Ahaha....so that's why you picked me...." She chuckled nervously.

" Sorry if it made you uncomfortable."

" No, no! We gotta do it for the task, right We can't lose class points now can we?" She seemed determined, though the visible redness on her cheeks has yet to disappear.

" Yes. Thank you for understanding." I nodded in gratitude.

" Okay, we're here at the fountain!" Kushida announced as we

both arrived at the indoor fountain of the mall.

" Well, I suppose we should begin..." I said and looked at her but she was currently facing away from me.

" But what dance should we do?" She hummed, " Is there a specific dance in the task? Ahaha, I'm pretty stiff at dancing but that won't be a problem right?"

She kept blabbering away...

" How long are we supposed to dance? Is there- huh, Ayanokoji-kun?" She paused and looked at me with confusion as I placed my hand on her back.

" Forgive me, Kushida."

" Huh? Forgive you for wha- AH!"

I pushed her in the fountain.

SPLASH! she goes.

" AYANOKOJI-KUN?!" Kushida shrieked as she looked at herself completely drenched in water. I felt everyone's gaze land on me simultaneously, their faces all sharing the same expression of absolute shock for what I had done.

I really want to end this game.

The longer this game goes on, the more likely I am to receive more tasks that garner awkward attention....

I waited outside the girl's restroom. I leaned on the wall, waiting for Kushida to finish wiping herself of excess water and changing into spare clothes that I kindly packed for her. They were my shirts and pants to be exact, I decided to lend them to her just this once due to today's circumstances.

' **Task complete!**' my phone read.

I was tasked to lie to a friend and trick them into going with me to the fountain and then pushing them in. Hopefully Kushida will understand.....well, not like it matters considering the route I'm going to end this game with.

Besides, this task actually helped me quite a bit.

I managed to retrieve the-

" Thank you for the spare clothes, Ayanokoji-kun...." Kushida's voice interrupted my thought process. I looked to her and saw that she was dry and had changed into the set of clothes I gave her.

" The shirt's a bit too big and the pants are....suprisingly okay at least!" She laughs to brush away the awkwardness.

I sigh. " Sorry about that, again." I apologized. Again.

She waves her hand dismissively in an attempt to brush away my guilt.

" It's okay! I understand....I was just suprised.....couldn't you have at least gave me a warning?" She asked.

" It said I had to lie to you. Thus, I assumed that I shouldn't tell you anything until after I pushed you. " I replied.

" Ah....okay...." She nods in understanding.

" Well, as compensation for gifting me with your ever-so-kind forgiveness. Allow me to assist you in whatever task you have." I said.

Her face lit up at that and she immediately grabbed my hands while wearing an excited smile.

" Great! I do need your help in something, actually!" She said.

" Okay..."

I just hope that Kushida's tasks aren't as troublesome as what I'm currently expecting...

(4 pm....)

We spent the whole day together, helping each other out with our given tasks and I must admit that we did well as a team despite our polar opposite personalities. It'd be a lie to say that spending time with Kushida during this, what I personally deem, as the ' final' round of the game, that I hadn't enjoyed our time together because truthfully, this felt relaxing.

This....This is the type of life I wanted....

Unfortunately, with the way things are now and with a bigger goal in mind....

I'll have to throw everything away....to win.

" Today was pretty fun, Ayanokoji-kun!" I hear Kushida speak, I quickly break away from my thoughts and looked at her.

She gave me a warm smile. " I hope we can hang out with each other like this next time too." She said in....a sincere tone?

" Hm, really? I honestly didn't think you'd enjoy spending time with someone like me." I averted my gaze.

" I'm a boring individual after all-"

" Don't say that!" She grabbed my arm, I stopped and looked back into her charming gaze.

" But it's true-"

" It's not! Please stop convincing yourself that you aren't a fun person. Just because you don't have many friends does not mean you're not a fun person. Take me for example, " She puts a hand on her chest while keeping that strong gaze, "I had fun with you today!"

"...." Her words sounded and felt sincere, not a hint of lies within her gaze or tone. But nonetheless, I have another reason for picking Kushida as my partner.

And that's to confirm Horikita's story...

" Thanks, Kushida." I replied. " I appreciate your words."

Her smile broadens and her cheeks once again reddens, though not like before.

" No problem." She said.

It's time...

" Kushida. There's another reason why I wanted to partner with you." I spoke.

" Hm?" She waited for my explanation.

" I'm suspecting that another class murderer will come out soon and I've calculated the best I could to pinpoint the exact location where it'll happen."

" Woah, really? That's amazing! You must be smart-"

I quickly cut her off by gripping her hand which was already holding a mine and I quickly began running and dragging her behind.

" Come on, we have to hurry."

" O-Okay! b-but please slow down!"

We eventually arrived at another dark spot of the mall where a murder hasn't taken place. We slowly made our way deeper in the dark corridors....

" Who do you think will show up?" She asks.

" A Class A student. "

" Oh, that'll be great for us!"

Indeed. However, I already know who the murderer is for Class A and the same goes for Class B.

" So," We both stopped and she immediately began looking around, " Where are we going to hide?"

" There's no need." I said to her.

" Really?" She turns around and looks at me but her happy expression melted into one of shock as she realized what I was holding....

I had taken out the gun I secretly retrieved from Kushida right before I had pushed her into the fountain.

I was already pointing the gun at her head sensor.

" A-Ayanokoji-kun?....w-what are you doing...?" She asked, her words were stuttered and she began to fidget.

" You killed Ike, didn't you?"

" H-huh? W-What are you talking about?!"

" Don't try and act innocent with me." I told her.

" N-No...seriously I really don't know what you're talking about! Why are you suspecting it's me? Why would I kill a fellow classmate?!" She begged for reason.

I glared at her, she froze. The place we were in, it was dark and you could barely see anything. However, there was one dim lightbulb that was flickering ever so often and with that, she could see the look I was giving her. The gun I'm pointing at her.

She knows that I'm serious about this.

" You already know what happens when you shoot the head sensor, right?" I asked, " It causes you to fall unconscious."

" However..."

She gasps when I slowly redirected my aim towards her chest sensor. The look of fear in her eyes only intensified, and that little gasp that she uttered.....it confirmed most of it. The likely chance of her being responsible for Ike's death has increased drastically.

" What's with that look on your face, Kushida? It seems to me that you know **exactly** what happens if I decide to shoot your chest sensor." I said in a dark tone. I watched her expression, surprise was

mixed in with her fear.

" A-Ayanokoji-kun....p-please hear me out....p-put the gun away-"

" Hear you out? Are you perhaps trying to justify Ike's murder? Or are you attempting to convince me to write it off as accident? If so, then you're more of a disgusting person than I had initially thought...."

" N-No, please listen!" She takes a step forward and I glared at her and seriously aimed the gun at her chest.

" Stay right there." I ordered.

She looks down to the floor before releasing a sigh.

She takes another step.

" Kushida-"

" If Ayanokoji-kun really wants to shoot me, then do it! " She yelled loudly. Fortunately enough, we went so deep in the corridors

that her voice cannot be heard outside of this area.

"..." I watched as she kept taking small steps towards me. She looked nervous even to the point of sweating, but she walked onwards nonetheless...

Eventually she stopped. Her chest sensor centimeters away from my gun. Point-blank range, if I decide to shoot then it's a guaranteed kill.....however, despite these odds, Kushida refused to back down and looked at me with a more determined gaze.

The gaze.....of a person who's desperately trying to tell the truth...?

She gulped before speaking,

" I didn't.....I didn't kill Ike-kun..." She started.

" As for how I know about the chest sensor....." she sighs, "I'm not sure if I'm supposed to share this information to you....with you being an ordinary citizen and all but..."

" The Director sent me a message about it. The moment I was assigned as the class murderer."

....

Again....that woman....

Tch.

She must be laughing hard through the cameras attached to our sensors at this very moment. Truly an irritating lady.

" Why didn't you inform our class about it?" I pressed on.

" I-I was scared! I didn't know if I should tell you guys or not! I was afraid something bad would happen....I didn't know if it was allowed.....I'm sorry.....I'm so sorry...." She apologized, I can see tears threatening to cascade down from her eyes.

If it were any other person in my place, they'd instantly forgive her and believe her explanation. However, the question of whether or not Kushida was truly a ' good' person still remains unanswered and yet to be proven.

To prevent trouble down the line, I must affirm that right now.

" Horikita told me that you two attended the same junior high. Is that true?" I asked.

" Horikita-san....said that?"

" Yes." I nodded.

" It's true...." She admitted.

" Very well. But she also said something about you being the one solely responsible for your class's self-destruction. Is that *also* true?" I gauged her reaction.

" Y...Yes...." She suprisingly says.

I continued with my interrogation.

" Why did you spread the secrets of your classmates? Why did you destroy all of their bonds? Even if they secretly said something nasty about each other, their bonds were probably maintained until you had to open your mouth and let all the secrets out." I asked.

"....I'm....I'm not sure if I should say why..."

" Say it. if you truly want to prove your innocence, then spill the truth to me right now." I moved the gun a bit as if to remind her of her situation.

"....It's because.....It's because....."

" Because...?"

She averted her eyes to the floor.

" It's because Suzune-chan told me to...."

What?

" Suzune? Horikita Suzune TOLD you to spread those secrets?" I asked, my usual monotone voice was laced with a bit of disbelief.

I was genuinely suprised.

She nods reluctantly.

" Y-yes....Suzune-chan and I were best friends.....when she asked me to do it....I tried to say not but then she threatened to end our friendship if I didn't do it....I didn't want to lose her." She says,

" But in the end, we grew distant....or rather, she grew distant from me and began ignoring me. Our friendship was over regardless of the choice I made at the time." she added, her tone was filled with sorrow.

This just grew more complicated. Horikita didn't say anything about them being friends,

" Just to confirm. You and Horikita were in different classrooms, yes?" I asked.

She nods.

So despite their different homerooms, Kushida insists that they were indeed best friends during junior high and apparently had a falling out after Kushida completed Horikita's favour.

Then.....there's only one question to ask....

" Why did Horikita tell you to do it?" I ask

" I can't tell you that!" She suddenly screamed at me.

What's with this reaction?

" I can't...I won't say it. I don't care what you do to me now but, " She places a hand on her chest, " Deep down, I still see Suzune-chan as my friend...my bestest friend....that's why.....I'll never say it...."

" Kushida, you do realize I can kill you right here and now-"

" THEN DO IT! I WON'T TELL YOU ANYWAYS! " She spoke aggressively, her eyes turned sharp as if testing me.

Something has definitely happened. It seems there's a deeper story into their relationship that I have no knowledge of.....however, there is still the chance that Kushida may be lying to me right now or even Horikita.

Both these girls....one of them is lying.

"All right, then." I put away the gun.

" Huh?" She seemed confused.

My gaze relaxed to its usual stoic manner.

" It seems the situation has only grown more complicated. If you ARE telling the truth, then Horikita must be guilty-"

" SHE'S NOT! DON'T YOU TRY ANYTHING AGAINST HER!" she growled at me.

"Fine." Whatever, I didn't plan to involve myself further with Horikita anyways.

Although searching for the actual truth of their relationship might sound interesting....

It fails to correlate to my original goal in this school and also to my new goal. Therefore, there's no need for me to pry further in their respective pasts so long as they don't threaten my present.

" You can relax. Here." I decided to hand the gun back to Kushida.

" H-Huh?" She looked at the gun and hesitated on taking it.

" You're just going to hand it back?" She asked.

" You wouldn't shoot. " I was confident about it.

It's possible that Kushida may be a liar....but.....

Even good people have to lie in order to protect others.

Though, that's if I truly believe she is indeed telling me the truth regarding her and Horikita's relationship. But I will keep her words in mind for future reference, though, I'm hoping I won't have to dive into their pasts any further than this in the near future

" I'm skeptical about what you've said regarding Horikita. But my main question has been answered with genuine honesty and that's what matters." The question was whether or not she killed Ike.

"O...Okay...." She sighs in relief.

" Though, I want to ask you one last question. If you don't mind." I said.

She nods her head, awaiting my question.

" Were you the one who voted out Ijuin?" I asked. I assumed it was Kushida at first, but now it doesn't seem to be likely.

" No." She answered, seriously, once again I fail to see any speck of lies in her eyes.

Maybe she's a good actress.

Maybe Horikita is a good actress...

Or perhaps....

I'm just bad at giving people the benefit of a doubt....

It's no surprise to me that I have my own issues of trust. That part of me is what I was hoping to change during my three years here but it was all for nothing the moment everyone was introduced to the real motive of this school, led by a psychotic director....

Perhaps 'change' is something I'll never achieve with the current situation. I will remain the same, maybe I'll even retain the 'me' that I was back at *that* place.....or it's possible that I'll grow worse from here on out.

Our phones rung, signifying that the round has officially ended.

" Let's go now, Kushida."

" Okay...."

It's time to end this game once and for all.

The class seemed determined to vote out Ryuen this time. But their hope was for naught, for the traitor still exists. I'd thought that they would try and discuss on how to deal with the class traitor, but even so, they'd fail since the traitor will hear about it anyways.

The best they could do is hope that the traitor will show mercy.

I'm going to have to crush that hope.

I went to the desk and took out a few voting slips....

" Ayanokoji-kun," Horikita suddenly called my name as I took my seat after submitting my votes.

I looked to her, " What?" I asked.

" Who do you think is the traitor? Our classmates are agreeing to vote Ryuen but it's pointless, right? The traitor is still here." she said in a disappointed tone.

" I don't know." I shrugged, " But while it may be pointless, while we may lose the first game.....there's one good lesson that came out of this clustered mess that is Class D."

" One good lesson?" She seemed interested.

" The lesson; *Is to put aside differences and work together, even if the situation is hopeless.*"

".....I see." She nods and gazes at our classmates. " There have been no fights or any sense of bitterness every since yesterday when they all talked their feelings out.....this is the best shape Class D has ever been in.....unfortunately, it won't guide us to winning." She said.

" Maybe not in this game." I told her, " Perhaps in future games, their efforts will have paid off, though, that is to assume that they continue like this and grow." I provided her assurance and a future hope.

"...Right..." She sighs. " We'll have more chances...."

....

....

.....

(6:30)

" Hello everyone! the voting will now be announced!" The intercom activated.

My classmates looked at the speakers with anticipation and hope. I think finding out the traitor, even if they lose, is all that matters to them at this point. That way, they will know who to avoid and cut off connections with. Perhaps that's the plan they came to an agreement on....

" Hmm.....ohoh~ I see~" Lumine's voice sounded impressed.

" It seems like the game is over!"

" Huh? What did she say?"

" The game is over...?"

" Is she....is she just trying to mess with us?"

" But how? You can only eliminate one class murderer at a time, right? "

" Class A,C,and B didn't eliminate any class murderers yet...so why?"

My classmates looked towards each other, uttering their confusions to each other. Horikita's eyes widened and she immediately looked towards me, as if I was the answer to all this confusion.

" Ayanokoji-kun....did you...." She whispered but I simply gave her one look and she understood everything and refrained from further speaking.

" The traitor of Class D is the victor!"

" No.....what? wait, this is fine....the traitor only won with the third option. They'll just win 500,00 private points and a protection point right? That's the reward for giving away our class murderer-" Miyamoto tried reassuring but was interrupted by Keisei.

" But that's not enough to end the game. Giving away our own murderer will just get us eliminated as a class....to truly end the game, all class murderers must be eliminated.....so..." Keisei gasps.

" The traitor....found out all of the class murderers..." Matsushita finished but even she couldn't believe it.

" The traitor has won with the secret route that's connected to the third option! Congratulations ya sneaky scumbag, ya did it! " Lumine cheered and I could hear her clapping from the intercom. She must be mocking me with an applause or perhaps its genuine due to how entertaining this must be to her.

My classmates must be horrified, wondering who the traitor really is.....to identify all of the class murderers at once? Not only that, but to eliminate each of them at the same time?

Truly, an individual to be wary of...

Lumine PoV

He did it!

He did it!

He actually did it!

I felt giddy all over, shaking in my seat, a big smile on my face and no doubt that my pupils must have turned to stars at this outcome! No doubt that Ayanokoji Kiyotaka probably has more in store for me if he continues to win like this but I'm satisfied with it anyways! Haha!

My heart is fucking racing. There was one other student from last year, who was close to finding out the secret but got cuckold by his own classmates! So I was incredibly disappointed but not anymore!

As long as Ayanokoji stays in this school, I can have unlimited excitement!

Well....that is, if he has a reason for victory.

I smirked at that.

And I have a reason to give him.

Oh, I better announce the traitor's identity...

Hehe~! This will be fun!

" And the traitor's identity will also be revealed! " I announced loudly through the intercom.

I looked at the security cameras that were viewing Class D. Their faces look so broken! In utter disbelief!

Well, Ayanokoji already stabbed them with the blade....

And it's my turn to twist it even deeper....

" The traitor is none other than Ayanokoji Kiyotaka!"

Ayanokoji PoV

Initially, I came to this school fully expecting a normal life.

I wanted to discover the type of person I am....the type of person I should've been....the type of person I could've been.

But the moment the curtains were lifted...

The moment the ulterior motive behind the school was revealed...

The moment Lumine dragged us, the students, into a hell disguised as paradise...

Is the very moment.....my peaceful life was threatened.

In this world, I was told that winning is everything.

As long as you remain unharmed, you win.

As long as you gain everything with nothing to lose, you win.

As long as you survive in this cruel world.....then you win.

Even if it means hurting others.....killing others....manipulating others.....seeing them as 'tools' to be used instead of fellow human beings....

As long as I win in the end.....

" The traitor is none other than Ayanokoji Kiyotaka!"

That's all that matters.

" Ayanokoji-kun.....you betrayed us...?" Kushida asked as everyone turned their heads towards and stared at me with looks betrayal and hurt.

I simply leaned my cheek on my palm and averted my eyes to the window where I saw the birds flying freely in the sky. That should've been me. I wanted to be free but no matter where I go, there are chains waiting to pull me back.

" This guy...."

" He's a monster..."

I'm well-aware.

" TRAITOR!" I hear them roar with nothing but pure distaste.

Nonetheless, I paid no heed to their words of insult and slander. What I decided to do can never be undone.

" Ayanokoji-kun...." A familiar called out to me.

It was Horikita Suzune's voice. I sighed and decided to glance at her direction. Her eyes glimmered with a fiery resolve, but her figure was trembling in fear or anxiousness or both....

Unexpectedly, she began kneeling to me.

" Huh?! Why is Horikita-san kneeling?!"

" W-Was she working with him the entire time?!"

" S-She was a traitor too!"

" Horikita what the hell are you doing!" Sudo yelled. " Why are you kneeling to this bastard!"

" What are you doing, Horikita?" I asked her, nonchalantly.

Her lips were quivering, hands still trembling, but nonetheless, she silently bent her body until her head made contact with the ground, giving me a full kneel.

" No matter what they say....I....." She stuttered before looking up

at me from the kneeling position.

" I'll follow you....I'll do whatever you wish but please.....please help me in return!" She begged,

Our classmates collectively gasp in shock at her words. In a few minutes, she'll end up in my position. By submitting to me, she is throwing away all of her credibility. She had sacrificed her safety lock and now, the class will also deem her an outcast along with me.

I wasn't too suprised.

She was a weak little girl. A weak individual such as herself. who is incapable of doing anything for herself, will come to see me as her last hope to achieve her goal. In her eyes, at this very moment, I decide whether or not she lives or dies.

She's fully resign her title as ' **Human Being**'

And is now willing to become my **tool**.

But I decide whether I can use her or not.

And right now, she is of no use to me.

" No." I rejected her last attempt with finality.

" W-What?" Her jaw dropped in shock. She looked at me with pleading eyes.

" W-Why...?"

" I don't need you. You're absolutely useless to me." I put it straight,

" Useless..." My classmates muttered in confusion.

But Sudo's loud footsteps were coming my way as he began yelling with a closed fist, ready for a possible physical confrontation.

" USELESS? DO YOU SEE US AS TOOLS OR SOMETHIN'? " He glared.

"..." I sighed and ignored him, opting to stare back at the window.

" HEY, DON'T IGNORE ME! NOT ONLY DID YOU BETRAY OUR CLASS. YOU ALSO DID IT EVEN AFTER ALL THE SACRIFICES WE MADE! WHY DID YOU DO IT!"

The sky is beautiful today....

" OI! YOU FUCKING ASSHOLE! YOU GOT 3 SECONDS TO ANSWER ME BEFORE I PUNCH THE ANSWER OUT OF YOU!"

" Sudo, calm down!"

The sunset could be seen from here, the wide array of colors that reflect the sun, truly, the sunsets are an underappreciated wonder of the world. Or perhaps that's my own opinion considering most of

my life, I was refrained from seeing the outside.

It's beautiful, truly.

" GRRR. FINE, YOU ASKED FOR IT, AYANOKOJI!" Sudo said and I begin to hear him cracking his knuckles.

I finally decided to spare him another glance. A bored look, to be more precise.

" Sudo-kun, don't try it!" Horikita stood in between us, with her arms spread wide defensively. She was trying to protect me.

" Get out of the way, Horikita! This bastard needs to answer our questions!" Sudo looked beyond angry.

" You don't understand-"

" NONE OF US WILL UNDERSTAND BECAUSE HE REFUSES TO SAY ANYTHING!" he interrupts.

" But still-"

" OUT OF MY WAY!" Sudo roughly shoved Horikita to the side, uncaring of how much force he exerted upon her. I've truly angered him and his complete lack of self-control was on full display for all of us to witness.

" EAT SHIT, AYANOKOJI-" He swung a punch that was to be directed to my face.

However, I instinctively stood up, ducked, and punched him to the gut.

" PWAH!" I hear him release a sound, indicating that he was caught in surprise and in pain.

He clutched his gut and as he did so, I quickly maneuvered to his side and took a few steps back. I stayed in a neutral position, hoping that this was the end of it.

" You got me good there.....but it won't happen again...." He grins at me with an irritated expression.

My hope for naught.

Everyone watched silently, nobody could speak as Sudo came rushing towards me with another left swing, which this time I decided to block instead of evading. He then begins to swing with his right arm, but I decided to dodge by maneuvering under his blocked left arm, effectively getting behind him and directing a front kick to his back.

" Gah!" He stumbled forwards due to the force of my front kick.

" Please stop here, Sudo." I spoke to try and reason.

" This isn't worth it. " I told him but it only made him more angry.

" So NOW you speak? Were you just searching for a fight, Ayanokoji? Is that it?! Is that why you betrayed us when two of my friends died because of this school!" He yelled.

" I do not care about your ' friends'. They are irrelevant to me." I told him my honest thoughts.

" YOU'RE MORE OF AN ASSHOLE I THOUGHT.....THAT'S IT..."
He got into his fighting position.

" I'LL BEAT YOU UP TILL YOU DIE!"

He says that, but I wonder if he truly has the guts to kill another human being.

But I shall entertain his fantasy.

" Very well. Come at me." I mockingly beckoned him over as if he were a dog. It enraged him even more.

He rushes forward, throwing a barrage of punches, which I managed to slip by and also block but not once had I decided to pull a counterpunch on him. Not yet.

" You can't even hit me. What makes you think you can **kill** me?" I mocked him.

He releases a heavy exhale before throwing a right hook directed to my jaw, I leaned back but then he used his left hand to grab the collar of my shirt and-

BASH! He pulled me and bashed our heads together with an incredible amount of force.

I stumbled a bit. Admittedly, I was a bit dazed but I was still aware of myself and my surroundings.

" Heh." Sudo seemed proud of that before resuming his barrage of punches. I slipped, dodged, and blocked them, not once did I land a single hit or counterattack. Not yet.

" YOU SEEM OVERWHELMED THERE, AYANOKOJI!" It was his turn to mock me as he caught me in a clinch and began using his knee kicks, striking me in my abdomen.

" YOU'RE ALL TALK!" He shoves me away, I stumbled, my back hits the wall.

" AND NOW YOU'RE GONNA PAY FOR IT!" He rushes towards me again. He punched me right on the chest, making me lose my breath, and then began raining punches left and right while I tried to block. Unfortunately, he had pinned in a pretty tight spot, so I couldn't dodge yet. I had to endure blocking these punches and maybe even taking a few. But he knew what he was doing the moment he saw me put my hands up to defend my face, he would aim for body shots once he noticed that , and if I try block the body shots, then he will aim for my face...

The cycle repeats...

My face was bruised. I just knew it. Blood was seeping from my nose and mouth and my entire body felt sore from having to endure such strong punches....

" YOU'RE GOING TO DIE TODAY! AND EVERYONE IS GOING TO SEE! NOBODY HERE WILL HELP YOU, AYANOKOJI!"

I never needed anyone's help.

I've been alone ever since the beginning.

In this world, there is only one victor.

The same applies to such a petty fight like this.

And so.....

I'll show you what I am capable of doing.

For a moment, Sudo stopped his punches and simply gripped me by the collar.

" You had enough?!" he said, provoking me to give up.

I smirked.

" I thought you were going to kill me?" I asked him.

" Or....was that a baseless statement?"

" GRR.....ARE YOU FUCKING SERIOUS-"

" I should be asking you that question, Sudo.....are YOU fucking serious on killing me? Or was that just another threat your undeveloped brain came up with in the heat of the moment." I grinned in amusement as I watched his face contort in fury.

" FUCK YOU, AYANOKOJI!" He then attempted to throw another punch. But as he winded it back, I used my legs and forcefully kicked him off me with so much force that he fell onto the floor.

" W-What the?!" My classmates finally said something and it was words of sheer disbelief as they watched me wipe away the blood from my mouth. I stood normally, as if I wasn't pummeled relentlessly by such an athletic guy.

" Get up, Sudo. Show me your resolve." I glared at him with a sick grin formed on my lips.

He got up immediately and began charging at me, trying to grapple onto me but I quickly intercepted his telegraphed attack with ease by closing in immediately and landing an upper cut under his chin.

" ARGH!" He screamed in pain as he stumbled back and covered his chin. he looked at me with wide eyes as I slowly walked towards

him.

" Is that all you got? I only kicked you once, punched you three times, and yet you already wear that expression? How pathetic." I intentionally provoke him once more.

" GRRR DON'T GET COCKY, YOU SHIT!" He ran towards me again, his movements indicated that he was going to try and tackle me on the ground with the way his head was slowly lowering down to my center of mass.

BAM! I intercepted with an axe kick which managed to once again deal damage to his chin. This time however, he didn't stumble, rather....he fell to the ground immediately in pain.

" Grraagh...." He groaned in pain. I walked over to him and knelt down.

I grabbed him by the collar and forced him to look into my eyes.

" Such weak resolve. You pummeled me relentlessly with strikes, but not once did I back down. On the contrary, you took a few simple hits and now you're groaning in pain as if you fought your best. How pathetic."

his eyes widened in surprise when he saw my hand form into a

knifehand.

" A-Ayanokoji?" He began to stutter in fear as I gazed at him with eyes that contained no mercy.

" Sudo, the throat contains many vital points that contain the blood vessels, vocal cords, and the trachea which is known for helping in subconscious actions like breathing and swallowing." I started,

I began to lift my knifehand to a certain angle.

" H-H-Hey....Ayanokoji?!" His face exhibited true fear.

" If I hit your trachea hard enough, it could be fatal due to heavy trouble in breathing and lead to significant respiratory failure. Left untreated, and you'll no doubt die."

" I-I give up! You win! Okay, you win! Please....Please let me go!" he weakly took hold of my hand, which used to grip his collar but now I was gripping the back of his head.

" To win, there is only victor. The same applies to a fight. You intended to kill me, at least those were your words. I tried to reason, but you ignored it and gave in to your anger. So..." I prepared to strike.

" Is it not right for me to return the favor?"

" AYANOKOJI PLEASE!" Sudo begged as tears began to come out of his eyes.

" AYANOKOJI/AYANOKOJI-KUN, STOP!" My classmates begged and yet none of them dare take a step.

" Ayanokoji-kun!" Horikita yelled but she too, had not chosen to take a step to lend a hand to Sudo.

They beg me to let him go and yet they themselves refuse to step in and stop me. It's not an uncommon act, most people would often avert their eyes or shout insincere pleads to ' stop' while not actually doing anything about it. The same applies here, where they beg me to stop let go of Sudo and yet none of them actually do anything but yell. It's because deep down, they only care for themselves and are too afraid of putting themselves in a dangerous position for the sake of others.

Everyone is selfish. That's the reality.

" Too bad, Sudo. You said that nobody will help me, ironically enough, it applies you to you too. Funny, don't you think?"

" Ayanokoji-" He tried to plead but I already made up my mind.

I lifted my hand higher to the very peak of the strike to be more effective in damaging his throat. Sudo knew this, so he decided to close his eyes. He had finally accepted this.

A famous man once said; *That during a life or death situation, you have the right to punch, to kick, to bite, to kill.*

To attack anywhere you think will kill the enemy to save your life. That is how animals defend themselves, they don't dodge or block, they instead come rushing and biting you at vital points of your body with zero hesitation. Humans are the same.

The man said that the comparison between animal and human is pointless, because in the end, humans will resort to acting like animals.

Therefore, in his words I quote,

" Are we not animals? We have teeth to bite, we have nails to scratch, we have fists to punch, we have legs to kick. In the end, we will throw away dignity and fight to kill just like animals. Animals and Humans are no different from each other."

In terms of overall accuracy, he has many missing points that fail to back up his bold statement.

But in terms of instinct and when it comes to life and death, he is almost correct about everything...

However, there is actually one difference that humans have in a fight and animals don't.

" AYANOKOJI!!!!" My classmates yelled as I began dropping my hand.

SWISH!

But I abruptly stopped, mere centimeters away from his jugular and trachea.

" H-Huh...?" Sudo opened his eyes in confusion.

The difference is....

Self-control.

I let go of the back of his head and stood up, gazing down at him.

" Don't fight me again." Was all I said before looking towards the relieved faces of my classmates.

" None of you tried to stop me. You only relied on the power of words while completely ignoring in partaking action to stop me. All of you are terrible, truly." I said to them, in a heartless voice.

They looked down to the ground in shame and guilt, they knew I was right. Even so, it will not change the fact that starting tomorrow, each of them will ignore me and ostracize me from the class. The fact remains that I had chosen to betray them.

I looked at the clock.

'7:15 pm' it said.

I better head to the director's office-

" Calling Ayanokoji Kiyotaka of Class 1-D to the director's office!" I hear the director say through the intercom with a satisfied and delighted tone. She must have enjoyed my fight with Sudo.

I silently took the closest exit, I slid the door closed as I left the silent classroom.

Today has been eventful.

But now it's time to confirm whether or not Director Lumine can grant my true desires.

If she is able, then my effort is not a waste.

If she is unable, then I will simply move on and salvage what I hadn't thrown away just yet.

The moment of truth...

I stood in front of the office door.

I knocked three times and I hear her voice responding,

" Come in~!"

CHAPTER END!

6k+ words. I haven't done that in a while to be honest.

But yeah, game 1 is over!

I hope you enjoyed this chapter and look forwards to the next ones!

Also, it feels awkward when you ship Lumine and Kiyo together (considering KawaiiLumine is my user and my pfp is Lumine but...) eh, whatever!

I just imagine it to be a different version of Lumine so it's not awkward.

Anyways' I'm off to get my 4 hours of sleep.

KawaiiLumine, out~

Episode 6.5: A game between the Director and Ayanokoji?

This was supposed to be included in the last episode but I was too tired to continue. So this will be a short one.

Ayanokoji PoV

" Come in~!"

I was granted permission to enter. I opened the big door and entered, there she waited sitting on her desk with a huge smile on her face. She looks absolutely overjoyed probably due to the little ' show' I put out.

" Ayanokoji~!" She plops from her seat on the desk and onto the floor. She sauntered towards me and stopped once she made it in front of me.

" I knew you'd do it!" She proudly said.

" Though," She places a hand on my face in a gentle manner, careful not to press too hard on my wounds. " You should've fought back much earlier, no?"

" I thought if I take his fits then he'd be satisfied. It was only until I confirmed that he completely gave in to his anger, that I decided

to fight back and end it." I told her and grabbed her wrist, looking deep into her eyes.

" But enough of that. Let's talk about our agreement." I said to her.

She chuckles, " Very well~"

I let go of her wrist and she retracted her hand. She kept her usual smile before turning around and heading towards one of her computers. I watched as she began to type something and then suddenly her huge flatscreen TV turned on.

It was calling a number that I wasn't familiar with...

But for some reason, an odd feeling was currently surging within me as I watched the screen dial the number.

The call was answered and my eyes widened in suprise.

It was **him....**

" Hello, Mr. Ayanokoji!" Lumine waved at the screen cheerfully,

as if they were old friends.

However, my father did not reciprocate her chipper attitude.

" It's you...." He spoke in a disgruntled tone.

They know each other?

" Why did you call me..." My father asked, his piercing gaze directed towards the woman named Lumine.

" I made an agreement with someone. Speaking of which, you might be familiar with him!" She giggles.

" What?" My father seemed confused for a moment.

Lumine glanced at me, beckoning me over to her. I took slow steps and made my way towards her, it was only until I made it to her side that I finally gazed at my father's bewildered expression from the screen.

" YOU HAVE MY SON?!" He barked.

Your son? For a moment, it almost sounded like you cared about me. However, to you and to me, ' son' is nothing but a biological classification of who I belong to. A classification you use to preserve your rights as a ' father' in the public eye.

" I do! And he's awesome!" Lumine seemed uncaring of my father's anger.

" Lumine...." My father growls, " Return my son to me-"

" Hohh~? And who are YOU to order someone like ME, hm~?"

The atmosphere in the room turned cold. I glanced at her expression and she wore a cold smile with the eyes of a murderer. My father stopped speaking, his strong aura seemingly cracked for a moment, while I stood in silent disbelief at the sight of my father being silenced by this woman.

"My apologies.....Mistress...."My father's tone turned into a respectful one moments after.

" That's more like it!" Lumine's happy aura returned. I wondered about the many oddities this psychotic woman possesses.

" Now, you must have better things to do and since I hold....oh what am I talking about." She chuckles, " I hold no respect for you! Not one bit! After all, what's the point in holding respect for someone below me?" She grins.

I watched my father seemingly nearly pop a vein but he held his tongue back from further interrupting. I've never seen such hesitation from him when confronting this woman.

" Anyways, " Lumine grabs my arm and pulls me closer to her side.

" Your son and I made an agreement where if he won one of my death games, then he gets an exclusive reward from yours truly!" Lumine said.

"....And what do I have to do with it?" My father asked.

Lumine gives him an obvious look.

" I'm sure you already know why, Mr. Ayanokoji....." She said in a suggestive tone.

" Absolutely not. I won't allow it!" My father completely understood her intentions. But I, too, was shocked, if any other person were to propose something like this the way Lumine did it. They'd either be ignored, laughed, or threatened.....but this interaction was different.

My father is in denial. He may look like he's hell-bent on refusing Lumine's proposition, but Lumine's power over him was clear as day....

" You refuse? Haha! Are you seriously trying to refuse me?" She laughed at the screen, completely amused by my father's expressions.

The mood switches once more. She stops smiling and her glare was visible, in her eyes there was a fiery aura of superiority.

" Don't joke around now. You have no choice in the matter. You will agree in setting Kiyotaka free and leaving him in my hands. That's the end of it." She spoke in a tone which suggested a threat was in place in case my father continues to refuse.

I watched as my father with gritted teeth, began to sweat and tremble at the director's glare.

How much power...does she truly hold?

"....He's my masterpiece.....everything...my whole dream is dependent on Kiyotaka's production in the white room. If I set him free then that's equivalent to me losing everything-"

" There are other subjects in your disgusting facility, old man. Just create another masterpiece. Besides, you don't see your son as anything other than a milestone for your dream. " Lumine replied.

" Tch...." My father seemingly had no words to retort.

Lumine smiles as if she's already won the conversation.

" Anyways, we've come to an agreement, yes? You gave me the green signal? Unless...." She gasps and places a hand on her chest, " You'd like me to expose everything about your facility? Not just that, but the other secrets your hiding as well? Like what happened to your wife?"

His wife...?

Hold on, is she referring to my mother? What does she know about-

" FINE! DO WHATEVER YOU WANT! YOU CAN HAVE HIM!" My father surrendered completely. His face looked bitter.

" Just don't do anything. Don't spill anything." Was all my father asked in return.

Lumine smiles in satisfaction.

" Of course! A deal's a deal, after all~" She cooed.

" But just to be sure. He's mine now, correct? You're set on releasing him and leaving him in my hands? You won't try anything funny like sending another white room student into my school, hm?" She asked and gauged my father's reaction.

".....Yeah. He's yours. My hands are rid of him now...." My father reluctantly said, a burning anger was visible but this woman is hard to set ablaze.

" Then our business is finished!" She claps before waving goodbye, " Bye bye, Mr. Ayanokoji!"

She ended the call.

The room was silent. My mind continued to process what had just transpired and even then, it feels surreal. This woman single-handedly forced my father into surrendering and freeing me of my chains that were once connected to the white room.

Then....am I truly....free...?

" How was that for a reward, huh?" She turns to me.

" Who are you....?" I had to ask.

She tilts her head, a grin etched upon her lips,

" I'm just a psychopath who enjoys seeing the suffering of others!"
" She said in the same chipper tone. She's a twisted woman.

"....Right." I suppose I can accept that answer.

" Hey, Ayanokoji. How about I give you another reward....though, you're gonna have to play a game with me." She suddenly suggested.

I sighed. I had no intention of entertaining her desires for now.

" Frankly, I'm quite tired after today. I need to recover and treat my wounds, so I'm gonna have to decline-"

"If you win, then I'll grant you a normal life. I'll send you to a normal school where you can live the peaceful you so wish for."

I paused at her words.

I wondered why she suddenly offered this...

I narrowed my eyes at her, feeling suspicious of her ulterior motives.

" Why did you suddenly offer such a reward?"

" For fun of course!" She replied.

" If you win, then you will receive the aforementioned reward. However, " She points to herself,

" If I win then you're going to continue ' winning' at all costs

during your three years here."

Of course. It was obvious from the beginning that this was her intention and yet I was still too stunned by this new feeling of actual freedom in life to think about her motives behind such a tempting offer. She wants me to entertain her for the entirety of my student life here.

"What's the game" I decided to inquire.

"Russian roulette." She says.

Russian Roulette? She truly lives up to her title, doesn't she...

"Except, instead of betting on our own lives. We bet on each other's." She said.

"I see.....so you want to use the other method?"

"I knew you'd get it! Yes! That's exactly what I want!" She said, looking absolutely giddy.

The other method was simple. Instead of aiming for our own heads, we'll aim for each other's and the one who gets shot first loses. But this game was incredibly dangerous and lethal, I have no doubt that the director intends to ban body shots and only allow

headshots.

" How exactly will you reward me if I win and you're dead? It's very unlikely for you to live if I shot you in the head." I asked.

" On my desk, there is a button. I already informed someone about what I plan to do, so if you press that button then that 'someone' will receive a notification and then they will be the ones to send you to another school and take care of the rest." She explains.

" ...All right." I nodded.

Her eyes lit up in surprise, " You're not going to question me?"

" You pride yourself on not speaking a lie. So far, you've proven your words to be true and thus, I am able to believe you to this extent at least." I told her.

She smiles. She must feel delighted to hear it. She silently opens her drawer and takes out a revolver and a single bullet.

" One round." She presents the real bullet in front of me. " 5 chances." She places the bullet in the cylinder and spins it. The gun was loaded. It was a revolver with 6 rounds in its wheel.

" Let's begin, shall we?" She grins. A certain shine in her eyes tells me that she's done this before.

She aims the muzzle right to my head. I kept my calm expression and stared her down.

" You're going first?" I asked.

Click!

She previously ignored my question and had pulled the trigger without hesitation.

" Of course~" She says before handing me the gun. " It's your turn-"

Click!

I interrupted her when I pulled the trigger with the muzzle already aimed at her forehead. She releases a joyful sigh, this must be exhilarating for someone of her character.

4 triggers left. One of them is the bullet.

She wasn't intent on killing me if she gets ahold of the actual trigger. It was never explicitly stated by her that we should aim for

the heads alone, rather it was my own assumption after having observed her character for a while. She prides herself on speaking no lies but that only applies if she verbally makes a promise to shoot me in the head, which she hasn't.

After all, I wouldn't be able to entertain if I were dead.

Click!

She pulled the trigger again with no hesitation. Nothing had happened.

She hands me back the gun and I quickly aimed it at her head.

She looks at me straight in the eyes and her grin widened. She knows.

She knows that right now, that I have the bullet to shoot her for real. And all I have to do is to pull the trigger. I've calculated the probability and my odds of winning and was fortunate enough to have her shoot first to only increase my chances. This is only the fourth pull but both of us knew that this was the one. It was up to me now.

Even if my calculations were false, then it's also pretty likely that the bullet is in the 6th rounds, in which, my victory is still assured.

But that's only an ' if.

"Do it." she said.

I looked into her eyes, searching for any emotion of fear in them but all I saw was genuine excitement. Why did I even try?

" Do it, Ayanokoji!" She giggles like a maniac.

Once I shoot her, it's all over. My freedom will be within my reach once I shoot this bullet through her head.

" DO IT!"

BANG!

""

"...."

I sighed.

" Seems like I lost." I said.

" Hm..." She hummed when she turned to look at the item I decided to shoot. " You had to shoot my favorite coffee mug? You could've atleast aim for the painting."

Pieces of her favorite coffee mug were left shattered on the floor due to my bullet.

" Apologies." I said without sincerity.

She laughs and turns to look at me once more.

" Why didn't you shoot me?" She asks.

There were many reasons to justify myself in shooting her dead. However, I realized one important little detail that shouldn't be forgotten. That one detail gives me enough incentive into choosing not to shoot her.

I sighed and handed her the now bulletless-gun.

" Whether I like it or not, keeping you alive is much more beneficial than having you dead."

" Oh~?"

" My father is afraid of you. Fear was nothing I would've ever associated him with until now, you've shown how much power you have over him and I'm willing to bet that this is only a scratch on the surface. You're a psychopath that has been given the power to turn the playing field into your murderhouse. If you're dead, then there's no doubt that my father will receive news of it and come to retrieve me....." I explained to her in detail.

She laughs.

" I'm flattered!" She took my explanation as a compliment. Once again, proving that she is indeed a peculiar creature.

" Well, since you threw away your shot. Then you submit?" She asked.

....

" Director."

" Hm?"

" You already knew from the very beginning that you'd win this game, right?"

She smirks.

" What do *you* think?" She provoked my thoughts.

She wanted to play a mental battle, but frankly, I'm fed up for today and I need to go....hit the sack.

" Unfortunately, I'm quite tired of thinking. I concede." I raised my hands in surrender and accepted the punishment.

" Awesome! Oh, wait before you go...." She pulls out her phone and proceeds to type something in a fast pace.

My phone received a notification.

" That's the reward I promised if you picked the third route. Plus, a bonus for when you won through the **secret** method~" She winks.

I checked my phone.

500,00 private points as promised and a protection point...

As for the bonus-....

"...Thank you." I said to her and kept my phone away. The bonus reward was an unexpected surprise, but it was a welcome one.

She nods her head and proceeds to wave me off dismissively.

"Run along now, kiddo! And make sure to get a ton of rest because the next week will be a free week!" She says.

Free week?

I sigh. I don't wanna really think about her words right now, I should just accept it as is and think about it further tomorrow. Ah, isn't tomorrow the weekend? That's good. I turned around and made my way towards the exit.

"Sleep well, Ayanokoji~!" I hear Lumine call before I finally took

my leave and exit the room, not bothering to give her a polite response.

Lumine PoV

I felt my heart pounding.

I can't stop myself from smiling!

I finally secured Ayanokoji Kiyotaka and successfully coerced him into extending his praiseworthy performance on centre stage! Today is another wonderful day for a psycho lady like myself!

I began walking to my desk to return the gun but then I felt a sudden sharp pain near my abdomen which caused me to stop and clutch that general area with my hand.

" Shit.....ugh...." I cursed, feeling that pain once more is so annoying...

It grew worse.

" ARGH!" I fell on my knees and my breathing became heavy.

It felt like a thousand needles were piercing that area and only expanding more and more, it felt like I was imploding. My breathing became hoarse, this attack is something I'm still getting used to.

" H-Haha....d-damn it..." My eyes became drowsy but I continued to giggle to myself in order to cope with this unbearable pain.

" I need....my medicine..." I looked towards my desk.

I tried to stand up but my legs trembled with each step. My back was bent forward while my hand stayed where it was on my spot and continued adding pressure as if to relieve it just a bit. Still, it was pointless.

Thud!

I fell to the floor, my legs giving up. I clutched by abdomen in pain as I writhed every so often on the floor. My eyes only grew more drowsy.....

Don't tell me....I'm going to die here...?

" Just when things were getting interesting...." I muttered softly.

"ahaha.....w-what a bummer...." I chuckled through the pain. But I stayed on the floor. Perhaps this is actually where I'm going to die? Man, I should've just forced Ayanokoji to shoot me instead if I knew this was going to happen.

So goddamn stupid.....

Nothing is more ungraceful than dying in a way you don't intend to...

Creak! I heard the door open and soft footsteps from behind me.

I smirked again. I'd almost forgotten about her, how foolish of me.

I struggled to turn my head to look towards her kneeling figure.

" You're here.....just in time...." I managed to say before passing out.

(1 hour later....)

I slowly opened my eyes. I blinked a few times before realizing where I am.

" Mistress." The girl came to my side and placed her palm on my forehead.

"....Heh...." I chuckled. Looks like my carelessness got the best of me again.

" You were careless again." She said.

" I know..."I looked towards my hand to see a tube inserted into my vein. Looks like she chose to IV me this time, how un-fun of her to do...

" I needed to do that. Or else the effect will get worse." She spoke as if responding to my inner thoughts.

Well, I wouldn't be surprised if she could read my thoughts at this point. After all, I've known this girl ever since she was 9 when I took her in....

" Here." She hands me a glass of water and a few tablets of afinitor.

I silently accepted it and placed the tablets in my mouth before chugging down the water to help it travel down my throat smoothly. I released a sigh of relief and returned the empty glass to her.

" Thank you~" I winked at her while putting my tongue out and feigned cutesy.

" Mistress-"

" I know....I'll TRY not to forget again.....but hey, " I smirked. " I have you here to keep watch of my health! "

She sighs in response, and she looked at me with amusement in her eyes.

" You seriously never change...." She mused.

I leaned back on my cushion, playing with my IV tube out of boredom.

" So, how's school?" I asked.

" It's a shame my class lost....but...." She looks at me with a glimmer of excitement, " Was mistress satisfied with the results?" she asked.

I smiled at that.

" Of course I was. Ayanokoji Kiyotaka proved to be beyond what I had initially expected and it'll only get better from here....I'm hella excited to see how this will develop...." That pounding in my chest resonated once again the more I thought about it.

But enough of my excitement...

I turned to the girl with a curious gaze.

" How about you? What do you think of him?" I asked.

" At first, he didn't seem anything special when I first **interacted** with him. However, when he pulled off the third route along with the secret.....it amazed me. I can understand why mistress took an interest in Ayanokoji." She tells me her honest thoughts.

As expected of my apprentice~

" By the way, that was pretty bold of you to kill Ike during the first round. I thought you wanted to refrain from such actions until the right time is available?" I raised a brow, amused at her now embarrassed expression.

She began to fumble on her words in a cute way.

" W-Well...I...uhm...eto...." She looked down to her lap. " I-I couldn't help it!" She screamed.

She then pouts at me. " This is all Mistress's fault anyways! You've influenced me too much!" Oh, so now she's pointing the blame to me? Silly child.

" Ehhh~? Really now?" I leaned closer to her and placed a hand on her cheek.

Her cheeks redden in response to my touch.

" Now you're going to place the blame on the person who took you in? How terrible of you to do such a thing~"

I teased her but instead of responding like how she usually does by turning red and going crazy like a hot kettle. She grabbed my wrist gently and gave me a beautiful smile.

" Perhaps I'm jealous that Mistress only has her eyes on Ayanokoji instead of me...." She whispers.

"...." I didn't expect that response. Sly girl.

She lets go of my wrist and I retract my head while narrowing my eyes at her.

" Have you been working on these responses?" I asked, curiously. When in the world did she of all people began to act SMOOTH with ME?

" You used to tease me with words back when I was young." She says before closing both of her fists and raising them in determination, " But now that I'm grown, I want to also tease you!"

So childish....

I chuckled nonetheless. " I see..."

She stood up from her seat.

" Well, I should probably head back. Mistress, please make sure to not take off the IV just yet. Only take it off when you wake up tomorrow, okay?" She warned me before heading to the door.

" Ah, wait!" I called out to her and she paused and turned to look at me with a curious tilt of her head.

" Game 2 might destroy all the bonds you've created within your class. I don't really like giving warning to what I plan to do but you're an exception since you and I are quite close. " I said and gave her a serious gaze.

" I won't give you a protection point. However, I will provide you with expulsion so you can escape unharmed and unsuspected since there's no doubt that things will get crazier from here on out-"

" No, thanks." She said.

" Hm?" I took a double take on her expression and I felt my eyes widening and my heart was beating rapidly once more.

The eyes of a murderer...

The grin of a sadist...

That was the look she was giving me.

So she intends to continue....oh how I love this girl...

I gave her an evil smile of my own.

" Very well. Good night to you." I said to her. If this is what she desires, then who am I stop her?

" Good night to you too, Mistress Lumine."

And the doors opened and closed once more. Her presence was no longer in the room....

"

hehe.....Hehe.....Haha....HahHA.....HAHAHAHAHAHAHAH!!!!" I began laughing hysterically.

GAME TWO IS GOING TO BE SO MUCH FUN!

Chapter End!

Jesus, It was supposed to be a short chapter but my brain decided to say no....

Anyways, in the next episode, it will be a free week for the students of ANHS before they begin the second death game!

Hopefully you enjoyed a major interaction between Lumine and Kiyo and also between Lumine and this certain person of whom I didn't put the name of.

Can you guess her identity? I'm sure all of you can guess it by now tbh.

KawaiiLumine, out!

Episode 7: Outcast.

Ayanokoji PoV

(Saturday)

I sighed.

I got up from my bed and felt the soreness from my bruises on my body.

" Ah.....Sudo you really didn't hold back, huh..." I mused. I'm only starting to feel the pain now since my adrenaline rush has long gone.

I checked the time and it was currently **9 am**. How unusual, I slept like a log. I usually wake up quite early due to my fatigue and bruises, I suppose my body will ignore my natural wake-up time just this once in order to heal faster. I groaned in slight pain when I tried to stretch my back to pop a few cracks, however, these bruises are quite troublesome since the soreness only increases if I abuse my movements too much.

Well, it's a good thing I stopped by the clinic last night, and the nurse handed me some bacitracin antibiotic ointment....

Speaking of which, I should begin applying it now and also check if I have ice packs ready in the freezer. I slowly stood up , careful not to prompt my soreness any further, and slowly made my way to the drawer where I kept away the medicinal ointment.

I opened the drawer and took out the tube of bacitracin and slowly maneuvered my way towards my study desk where a chair was situated in. I pulled the chair and slowly sat down. I took another look at the instructions and it says I have to either get cotton buds, cotton, or just rub it gently on the wound with surgical gloves.

Well, I have some cotton, I guess.

I took out the bag full of cotton balls and placed them in front of me. I began unscrewing the tube's cap until I began hearing a soft knocking on my door.

Who could that be?

I sighed. Nah, perhaps it's better to just ignore it for now, I still have to deal with these bruises and a few cuts on my face. Choosing to ignore the knocking, I continued unscrewing the cap but stopped once the knocks began sounding louder with each attempt.

Perhaps ignoring it is NOT an option...

I slowly got up and made my way towards the door. I looked through the peephole and was quite suprised seeing that person from the other side of the door. I opened the door and there she stood with her gradient-crimson eyes.

" Good morning, Ayanokoji-kun..." Kushida greeted with a small wave.

" Kushida? Ah, good morning." I returned her greeting. I wondered why she was here, and what's with that bag she's holding?

Suddenly, she presses the aforementioned bag towards my chest.

" Here..." She said.

" What is it?" I asked after taking it.

" The clothes you gave me yesterday. I said I'd return them to you, didn't I?" She chuckles.

Oh, that's right. I do recall lending her some spare clothes after having pushed her into the fountain....

" Ah, thank you." I nodded in gratitude.

" Are you okay?" She asked me with worried eyes. She must be staring at my bruised face.

" I'm okay." I assured her, though I don't quite understand why she should care about someone like me after what I'd done.

" Do you have medicine for your bruises?" She asks.

" I do. I was about to apply them until you came knocking-" But before I could finish, she quickly excused herself into my room.

" Let me apply them for you!" She says.

"...."

Why? What are her intentions?

" Kushida, I can do it myself-"

" No, please. Will you me do it for you? " She turns around and gives me the puppy eyes. Most boys wouldn't dare defy her wishes when she gives you these eyes which radiates pure cutesy....

"...Most of the bruises are on my body. And I don't really feel comfortable in showing it..." I tried to persist in having her leave.

She shakes her head, " It'll be okay! I can be gentle in applying it." Giving me a completely unrelated answer.

That's not the problem.....do you even SEE the problem..?

" Please?" She pleaded once more.

I sigh internally. I doubt she'll leave unless I become a bit more forceful, however, I do not wish to have to resort to that again especially at a trivial time such as this. I might as well just let her stay and do whatever she wants so she can leave.

" All right....I'll let you apply it. " I relented and she seemed happy about it.

After preparing some ice packs for later. I began taking off my shirt.

" A-Ayanokoji-kun....." I hear Kushida gasp. Though it was to be

expected since....

I then felt a tingle on my back, she was gently gliding her finger on my skin.

" You have....so many scars...." She muttered.

This is exactly why I preferred you leave...

" I don't have much bruises on my back, so could you please start with my front? Sudo punched my abdomen more times than I could count." That's a lie. I definitely counted it subconsciously. He punched my abdomen 15 times.

She sighs before unscrewing the tube of the bacitracin ointment. She squeezed a bit of the ointment on a ball of cotton and then I turned to her, having her face my upper body while she sat down.

Her face reddens a bit. Though I wonder why? It couldn't be because she's sick....perhaps she's flustered?

I've read a few mangas where the male protagonist was in this same situation with their love interest and usually, the girl would blush once she saw the bare upper body of their lover.

But, I'm not exactly her ' love' now, am I?

Nonetheless, she began slowly applying the ointment gently on my bruised areas. Her delicate hand carefully rubbed the soaked cotton against my dark-colored bruises in a circular motion but sometimes she'd resort to either vertical or horizontal motion depending on how bruised the area is and its vague shape.

" Does it hurt?" She asks after a while.

" It does."

" Eh? How come your face doesn't look like it hurts...?"

" It's not necessary for someone to express their pain by contorting their faces, you know? If they say it hurts then it most likely hurts. "

" I know that. But it's different when Ayanokoji-kun says it hurts....not only do you have such a stoic face.....the same applies to your monotone voice. So can you really blame if I thought otherwise?"

Hmm, she has a point. Perhaps I hold a bit of fault in that area, yet at the same time I couldn't do anything about it. This has always been who I am.

" Though..." She pours ointment on a new cotton before proceeding to rub my other bruised spots.

" Ayanokoji-kun's face....was scary yesterday...."

" Was it?" I didn't realize.

She simply nods. I was curious of what face I made so I decided to pursue further information regarding this.

" What face did I make?"

" You were grinning....when you started to fight back against Sudo-kun you were grinning....it gave me the same vibe as that of the director. Not only that, but also your eyes...it was frightening really...." She told me honestly.

I was grinning? That's new. This information is quite shocking....but interesting.

" And your words were also scary....even scarier than when you confronted me yesterday about....you know...."

" I apologize for that. And I also apologize for scaring you." Perhaps I should change the topic?

" It's okay...I got over it." She says, and yet I could feel her uncertainty with her own words. She's lying for my sake, but I don't necessarily care if she starts fearing me or not.

" Can you turn to the side, Ayanokoji-kun?"

" Hm?"

" There are some bruises on the sides. I want you to turn to the side so I can apply it efficiently."

I did as she asked me to and turned to the side, letting my right side face her while I lifted my right arm so it wouldn't get in the way.

She began applying some ointment on that too.

" Ayanokoji-kun? Can I ask something?"

" I won't guarantee you an answer."

" That's fine....please answer if you feel comfortable but can I still ask?"

I sighed. " Sure."

" Why do you have so many scars around your body?"

There was no other question she'd ask other than the obvious. Indeed, I understand her curiosity and shock after seeing this many scars on the body. But the details of how I got these scars are something I can't explicitly say to her. However, I can try to mix in the truth with a few lies so her curiosity can be satiated for the time being.

" I lived in a not-so-friendly home." I told her.

"...Was this the result....of abuse?"

" Yes." I lied.

"I'm sorry..."

She stopped her movements, placing her hands on her lap. I let my right arm fall to the side and I turned to look at her. She wore a guilty expression but what for?

" Why are you apologizing?" I asked.

" W-Well....now I know why you didn't want to tell me....so I'm apologizing for pushing the topic further....I'm sorry." She says.

If that's the case, then what's the point of wearing an expression of guilt? Kushida says this and that but her face doesn't match with her words. She says she feels bad for pushing me to tell her this believable excuse, but her face says that she's feeling ' guilty' for me.

But why is that? She wasn't involved in my past. She wasn't the one who received these scars, she wasn't the one who delivered these scars. So why look guilty for something you didn't know of until now? Is this a normal human trait? To feel guilt for others?

It seems like I still have a lack of understanding when it comes to the human heart (metaphorically speaking) and the emotions it contains.

Still, I better quell her unnecessary anxiety. I gently patted her head in a comforting manner.

" It's all right. I don't think much of it and it hasn't really affected me emotionally at all." That remains true, though deep down, I wish it did.

" A-Ah...okay..." She seemed to calm down, taking deep breaths and I retracted my hand once she was all right.

I will admit, although I don't understand Kushida's intentions on coming here and feeling ' guilt' for my half-baked truth...

It felt nice being cared for even if this was just falsity from my end....

(Monday)

The soreness has gradually decreased over the weekend but that doesn't mean it was gone fully, rather, it's just that I don't really notice the pain now unlike two days ago when it was at its peak. I walked towards my classroom and I could feel the air of awkwardness just radiating from the Class D's door.

I began to brace myself as I gripped the door handle, ready to slide it open.....

Fwoop! I proceed to slide the door open and took one step in....

Everyone was talking at first until they noticed my presence and thereafter came silence...their eyes piercing my very being. Their eyes full of fear, nervousness, anything negative that they're feeling is probably because of me. I expected this anyways.

I sighed to myself, and decided to ignore their gazes. I made my way to my assigned seat and sat down quietly. Everybody soon resumed talking although they resorted to whispering and it was clear to me that they were whispering about Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, the class traitor....

The outcast.

Another individual soon slid the door open and in came the man whom I beat up and almost....almost killed. The red haired boy's eyes instantly landed on me and fear immediately began to surge within his gaze but he quickly averted his eyes and also quietly took

his seat.

Everyone noticed this.

Despite that, some boys began to huddle around Sudo's desk and greeting him good morning while talking about random things, though I'm willing the bet that I am involved as a topic in their conversation. Nonetheless, it seems as though Sudo has made some friends while on the contrary, I threw away my chance of making friends.

Was I jealous? Just a bit.

But this jealousy can't last for long since I'm now duty-bound to 'win' in order to secure my freedom. Betraying Director Lumine will hold great uncertainties in my future that I'm not too eager to really deal with, so for the time being, I shall faithfully abide to our agreement from a game I lost against her.

I began staring at the window once more, admiring the outside but little by little, a bit of boredom begins to surge after staring at the same sight everyday. Humans will always seek for something new to try, new to see, new to feel....they never stay at one spot, but once they mature and grow older, they'll soon appreciate the things they've seen in the past and will often flock towards it for nostalgia when given the chance.

But I am still young and without too many memories to cherish, thus, I am still far from feeling the sense that is Nostalgia....

" Good morning Ayanokoji-kun!" A familiar voice interrupted my train of thought.

Everyone was silent once more, it must be due to the shock of someone actually greeting me with such chipper tone despite of what had transpired the week before.

I felt myself sighing internally. I already know who it is, her voice is obvious, but I desperately wished she just kept silent like everyone else and ignore my existence.

Still, it'd be unnecessarily rude of me if I fail to return her greeting, which in turn, would only worsen my reputations in this class.

I turn to her and gave a nod.

" Good morning, Kushida..." I blandly greeted her. Responding with the same cheerful tone would only make the situation seem more awkward.

She nods, and thankfully enough she said no more and headed back to her circle of friends.

What was that about? I wondered.

There was really no need for her to do that, but then again, this is the kind angel " Kushida Kikyo" greeting an outcast like me despite what I had done. But is she really an angel? Her story about her and Horikita and the self-destruction of her class still remains in question.

It looms over me; *Which one is telling the truth? Which one is telling the lie?*

" Good morning....Ayanokoji-kun..." I hear my seatmate greet me. I spared her a glance and she remained stoic but her movement contradicts that.

Her fingers were fidgeting as she read her book.

" Good morning, Horikita." I returned the gesture nonetheless.

And that was that. We spoke no further. It wasn't going to be like before and I don't know about her, but I'm pretty fine with it.

A few minutes later, Chabashira-sensei strolled in and looked at all of us.

" Good morning, **Class C.**" She greeted with a rare smile on her face.

The classroom was silent. Everyone was in disbelief or contemplating whether or not Chabashira-sensei was aware of the class she in.

" Sensei?" Hondo raised his hand.

" Yes, Hondo?"

" You do realize which class you're in, right?"

" That's right." She nods. " I'm in Class C."

""

" HAH?!" My classmates simultaneously expressed their shock.

" S-SENSEI ARE YOU FEELING ALRIGHT?!"

" SENSEI ARE YOU DRUNK OR SOMETHING?"

" SENSEI MAYBE YOU SHOULD TAKE THE DAY OFF!"

My classmates seemed worried for her health, unaccepting of sensei's words or rather, they simply could not believe it. It was understandable but.....

" Enough!" Chabashira glared at all of them.

"...." Everyone shuts up.

Chabashira sighs, massaging her forehead, before saying;

" During the first game, Class D had won 500 Class Points. With that, they surpassed Class C's amount of class points and thus overtook them and became the new Class C. " She explained.

" SINCE WHEN?!" They all asked in shock mixed in with joy.

" Are you sure you want to know?" She asked.

" Of course, sensei. We must know since....I didn't really get to see what happened but I heard news that the traitor won.....so this doesn't add up....how did we earn the points?" Hirata, who was finally back in class, had said.

Speaking of which, those who were shocked unconscious or eliminated via vote were simply detained and stayed in a special room until game 1 finishes. Once it did, the detainees were released. Ijuin is still a bit awkward for what he'd said back when he was eliminated, but my classmates don't seem to mind his presence. It seems like he rekindled his relationship with this class even if it's a little bit.

Unlike me.

" Very well, you might be shocked but since you want to know. Then I'll tell you." Chabashira said with finality.

My classmates nodded vigorously.

Chabashira lifts her index finger and proceeds to point at something.....or rather someone....

" Ayanokoji." Was all she said as her finger landed in my direction.

My classmates immediately turned their heads to me but then turn to Chabashira-sensei with confused looks.

" What does.....ugh....Ayanokoji...have to do with anything?" Karuizawa hesitated to say my name, though I could sense the disgust in her tone.

My classmates also shared the same question.

Chabashira sighs.

" Ayanokoji....won through the secret route in which he eliminated all the class murderers including his own, at once." She explains.

" W-Wait....so even though he betrayed us.....we won 500 class points?"

" Did he do it on purpose?"

" If he did, then why didn't he just tell us?"

" S-Should we thank him? Ah...but...he was so scary yesterday." A girl named Mei-Yu Wang expressed her hesitation.

My classmates were whispering to each other, debating if they should express their gratitude or just leave it be. I sighed at this. Why can't they just shut up and accept the 500 class points? besides, I hadn't anticipated that ' bonus' from Lumine in the first place.

The very root of my intentions was selfishness and now they're debating on whether or not I was selfish or selfless. How annoying....

My classmates glanced at me but said nothing.

Thank the heavens.

(Lunch time)

I ate alone in a table. Apparently, a ' free week' meant that this school would actually function like an actual ' school' for an entire week before we are eventually dragged into another game the week after. Seems like the Director was kind enough to give us a little break....

Well, knowing her, this is more of ' preparation time' for whatever extravagant she has planned for us, rather than a break for the students. I'm already dreading it but I have a protection point, so I can use it at any time in case the game is something I

truly want nothing to do with.

" May I sit here, Ayanokoji-kun?" Kushida's voice interrupts my thoughts again. Why is she doing that?

" Hm?"

" May I sit here?" She repeated her question.

This girl....what are her intentions....why is she trying to talk to me so often...

" Sure." I decided to accept so I can ascertain her motives.

She nods happily and sits down....on the seat beside me.

" Kushida."

" Hm?"

" Why are you doing this?"

" Doing what?"

I narrowed my eyes at her. Seriously, I'm trying to eat in peace and yet she has the gall to act dumb with an outcast like me. I've already accepted my title, anticipated it the moment I decided to go with the traitor route.

I wish I'd anticipate Kushida's actions, since I really have no idea on her reasons for getting so close to me. At first, I thought that maybe she wants to get to know my past or have me relay to her some private information but that doesn't seem to be the case. Her actions seem honest and her words contain nothing but friendliness.

With this, it's hard to tell whether or not this is some 'act' but I have no reference to base my suspicions on it. I haven't yet proven whether Kushida was telling at the time so our interactions and her intentions are quite tricky for me to discern.

" Why are you acting weird around me? You're always trying to take time to talk to me...." I decided to get straight to the point.

"....Um..." She averts her gaze towards her food. I took a peek at her expression by tilting my head slightly and noticed that her face was red again.

Seriously, why is she so flustered? We're not lovers. And I doubt she has a crush on me or something.

" W-Well..." She stutters and promptly clears her throat before continuing.

" I already told you before that....as much as possible, I'd like to get along with everyone. Even after what you did, even if our classmates deem you as an ' outcast'. I want you to know that it doesn't matter to me.....that's all..." She said.

Ah, that makes sense then...

" I see. Well, worry not. You and I are still on good terms, it seems. So there's no need to go so far as to sit with me at lunch when you could spend better time with your friends."

" Huh?" She makes a confused sound and looks at me with a look I can't really define. But it almost looks like she was offended.

" What?" I asked.

" Are you implying that I don't have fun spending time with you?"

I stopped mid-bite. Now it was obvious that she WAS offended but it didn't make sense. Nevertheless, I decided to shoot the question back to her.

" Are you trying to say that you do?" I asked.

" Yes." Was her answer.

"I can never understand you, Kushida." I sigh. " But I'm quite flattered and a bit happy that you do have fun when you're around me."

" Or maybe you just don't accept the truth, Ayanokoji-kun. Perhaps it's not a matter of understanding but rather you seem to try hard in finding an answer that suits your taste. That's why you doubt me." She chuckles.

....Interesting choice of words, Kushida.

While I can't deny that there is a bit of truth there within your statement, you're not wrong about me finding an answer that benefits me or in your words, " suits my taste", however, you're wrong about me regarding the acceptance of truth.

In a bout between human beings, in an attempt to discover the truth and the lies.

There are three 'truths'.

Person 1 tells their truth of the problem at hand, it's likely that the prosecutor will believe them first since they shared their side of the story first.

Person 2 then begins to retell the story from their perspective, which in turn, becomes person 2's truth of the matter at hand. It's

likely that the prosecutor will have doubts on person 2's testimony.

And now the third truth....

The third truth only begins to realize....once the prosecutor finds the liar between person 1 and person 2.

And you're person 2, Kushida.

Your actions in recent times has me become wary of your presence, I still try to keep cool just so I could get close to you enough and yet, it is always you who initiates our conversations. It's almost like your subtly trying to lead me on and follow your 'truth' while completely disregarding Horikita's truth for she is person 1.

I feel as if I need to discover the truth soon or else either one of you will cause destruction within the class.

But before that, I need to confront Horikita regarding her opinion on Kushida's side of the story....

But suddenly, a new voice interrupts my thoughts.

A lunch tray was placed on our table.

I look up from my food to discover that the culprit was none other than Ryuuken Kakeru of Class C.

" Well, Well...if it isn't the traitor."

He grins.

Before I could open my mouth to speak, another sound begins to enter my range of hearing.

Clonk. Clonk. Clonk. Clonk

Both Ryuuken, Kushida, and I turns to see where that noise was coming from and to my surprise it was none other than **Sakayanagi Arisu** of Class A. And with her, a girl with purple hair whom I presume is Kamuro Masumi, had accompanied her.

" Fufu~ Seems like Ryuuken-kun beat me to it. Though I feel as if we're missing one person, don't you agree?" Sakayanagi spoke with a smug smile. The girl beside her, Kamuro, seemingly scoffed and completely fed up with having to follow this girl.

As if on cue, another voice and hopefully the last, had entered the conversation....

" I believe that'll be me!"

Ichinose suddenly arrives, greeting all of us with a wave and bright smile before also placing her lunch tray in our table. Kushida looks between the people present on our table and she seemed incredibly intimidated.

I, however, kept a calculating gaze on each of them present.

And as if it was planned...

They all began staring at me too.

CHAPTER END!

The class leaders....the icons of this fic's cover....will finally interact in the next episode!

This was a bit rushed if you didn't notice. I was supposed to include more but I decided to change my plans a bit and save it for next episode!

I'm excited to write a conversation between these four individuals in a fic like this. Especially after knowing who the traitor of Class was after the end of the first game!

I'll see you in the next episode!

KawaiiLumine, out~

(Btw, I'm considering making ' special' episodes soon that

will explain Lumine's backstory.....but it's just a consideration. I just wanna focus on the main plot for now so maybe I'll write it after I'm satisfied with how far the plot has gone.)

Ok for realsies,

KawaiiLumine, out!

Episode 8: Conversation with my adversaries..

Ayanokoji PoV

" You don't mind if I chill here for a bit, right?" Ryuen casually said before taking a seat in our table.

I do mind, actually.

Is what I intended to say if he hadn't just sat down immediately. I thought I'd enjoy my lunch break but I have a hunch that I probably won't....

" Nor do you mind me sitting as well, Ayanokoji-kun?" Sakayanagi asked in a sweet manner, although I can tell that she would've sat down anywa-

Annd....she already took her seat. I felt like each time these people further ruin my beloved lunch break, a small percentage of my life force gets forcibly drained without my consent. The girl who accompanied Sakayanagi also sat down to the right of her.

" Ayanokoji-kun, may I sit down?" Unlike the previous two, Ichinose kindly asked and waited patiently for my answer. Thank goodness.

" Yeah." I decided to just let sit her down so this confrontation can be done and over with.

" Let me get straight to the point." Ryuen takes a bite of his food before continuing, " You really played me, didn't you, Ayanokoji?"

" I am unaware of what you're trying to imply. Would you please enlighten me further?" I decided to reply with a hint of sarcasm, though I doubt anyone noticed since my voice usually stays monotone.

" Heh, you fucker." He seemed amused by my persistence in avoiding the topic, " All right then. I'm saying that you really played me like a fiddle. Voting Hirata during round 5? That was something I didn't expect, and I was suprised to say the least." He points his fork towards me with a grin as if he's figured me out.

" I thought that was the end of supprises, however, you proved me wrong again by eliminating all the class murderers in one round. I've been thinking about it and I came to one conclusion that made sense."

" And pray tell, what might it be?" I ask.

He laughs. " You took multiple voting slips and wrote down all the class murderers on each slip. You took advantage of the fact that the director never explicitly stated that within the rules and thus you took the chance. "

Before I could say anything to respond to his conclusion, Sakayanagi spoke first.

" You seem proud of such an obvious conclusion, Ryuen-kun. " She remarked.

" Hoh? Does it look like I'm proud to you, Sakayanagi? Besides, you talk big game but weren't you completely useless to your class?" He made a remark of his own. Provocation versus Provocation.

Sakaynagi kept her calm smile,

" Does bullying my disability justify your loss? Indeed, I will admit that I wasn't much help to my class but it seems like I have to remind you of one simple fact. You lost because you missed one little detail. I may have done nothing and lost, but you have done EVERYTHING and you still lost. Fufu~" She puts her hand up to her mouth and hides her laugh, though she intentionally made it audible for us in the table to hear.

" How pathetic~" Sakayanagi said with condescending eyes.

" Oh...?" Ryuen didn't even try to hide his irritation. He kept his grin but his eyes and actions told a different story as I watched him grip his fork a little bit tighter while keeping his gaze on Sakayanagi.

Ichinose began to mediate the situation.

" Hey, hey you two. Please calm down! We wouldn't wanna garner too much attention here now, do we?" She asked.

Sakayanagi and Ryuen seemingly ignored Ichinose's advice and continued with a battle of mental dominance. I could almost see lightning appearing between them. Seeing that this situation won't get anywhere further unless I take action, I turned to Kushida.

" Kushida." I asked the unusually quiet Kushida. She looked at me as if snapping out of her intimidated expression just by looking at me.

" Yes..?" She asked.

" I suggest you excuse yourself for now." I directed my gaze to the three class leaders plus Sakayanagi's escort before redirecting my gaze to Kushida.

" The situation will probably only get a bit more intense. So..." I trailed off, hoping that she'll get the message and follow it to heart.

She finally nods, understanding my request. " Y-yeah, I get it." She said before standing up which called for the class leaders' attention.

" I will have to excuse myself everyone," Kushida smoothly said with her usual tone. " I just remembered that my friends have something they'd like to talk about with me. So I best be going. See you around!" She said before waving a small farewell and then eventually walking off to another table blending in just as quickly.

Her social prowess is truly worth noting. Is it a natural charm of hers that she developed further down the line? Most likely.

Well, putting Kushida aside, it's time to get the bottom of this confrontation.

" You three." I spoke, and managed to grab their attention quickly.

" I honestly wanted to eat my lunch in peace, but then all three of you sat at my table seemingly with the intent to pull information from me. So why don't we cut to the chase?" I pointed towards the cafeteria clock, " We only got about 30 minutes of lunch time. So please get to the point."

" All right then," Ryuuken smirks. " How in the hell did you discover our class leaders?"

Before I answered that, I checked Sakayanagi and Ichinose's expressions after hearing Ryuuken's question. Ichinose looks like she's curious about it too, so it's okay to assume that it's one of the questions she was going to ask me later on. Sakayanagi's expression still remained the same with a pique of interest within her gaze, it seems like she has an idea of how I did it.

I returned my gaze to Ryuuken.

" Hm, all right. I'll begin with Class A." I start. I honestly didn't want to talk about this, but I doubt they'll leave me alone in the future if I don't own up to my victory as the traitor of Class D- well, Class C now.

" Katsuragi Kohei, a diligent student, and a reliable leader. He seems like the type of guy that can hide his class murderer's identity pretty well but that isn't the case at all. Because Katsuragi WAS the class murderer and he failed to hide his identity from me." As soon as I stated that, Sakayanagi laughs in amusement. So she knew too.

" How?" Ichinose asked.

" During the the third round, as I was roaming around the mall. I overheard a couple of class A students complaining about Katsuragi's methods which was to play defensively throughout and only strike back when it's necessary. The main goal of that strategy, correct if I'm wrong, was to simply gather information in every round and eliminate suspects through voting elimination alone. So

their class murderer was not allowed to eliminate students themselves." I looked towards Sakayanagi.

She nods and smiles, " Impressive. You're absolutely correct." She praised.

Ichinose looked astonished while Ryuen seemed only more interested the further I go on. Well, that's my intention anyways.

" But how did I find out Katsuragi was the murderer? Simple. His own strategy backfired. By playing it safe, he limited his own class's actions and routes to winning the game. In other words, he made it easier for me to narrow down their murderer and with that, I noticed a peculiar detail. Not everyone in Class A was onboard with Katsuragi's plan and Katsuragi himself was also acting pretty strange when I had a rare chance to encounter him in person. Do you three recall the first strategy that all of our classes used during the first round?" I ask them.

They nodded.

" That strategy was pretty boring, though, I'm also quite intrigued by the class murderer who decided to **kill** one of your classmates." Ryuen chuckles.

I , too, share the same feeling regarding on that topic. However, that's not the main focus of this conversation and even if it was, I wouldn't be talking about it, not even a single word. I believe Kushida when she says that she had no involvement in Ike's murder, but she's still a person I'm wary of.

I continue, " Then you can also recall all of the classes abandoning that same strategy the round after, yes? "

They nodded again.

" Good, because that was the biggest hint for me in suspecting the murderer of Class A to be none other than Katsuragi himself. Because during the following rounds, the few times I see him, he's ALWAYS around someone and he often helps them with their task but he himself does not perform his own tasks. I was a bit muddled regarding his persistence in staying with a partner at first. It didn't make sense since either one of them will make it obvious on who's

the murderer but perhaps there was another motive to why Katsuragi kept doing that. He's trying his best to divert the attention he has towards another classmate. " I looked to Ryuen, " He knew you were watching."

" Tch, so that's why huh..." Seems like Ryuen noticed it too back then but just couldn't land on the most probable reason.

" And also, I have another theory regarding as to why Katsuragi was staying with that one student. It's simply because he lacked people whom he can really trust." I stated.

" Trust? I'm sure he can trust his classmates, I mean, he wasn't sacrificed, right?" Ichinose pointed out.

" That's right. But that's where my theory comes in, it's related to a certain person's ejection from the game." I held my finger.

" Who were you suspecting, Ayanokoji?" Ryuen asked, his eyes showing a fiery gaze of scrutiny.

I pointed to Sakayanagi.

" Sakayanagi Arisu." I said.

" Fufufu! It seems like I've been caught. Interesting, truly!" She broke in a fit of giggles. She was barely holding herself together throughout my explanation because she, herself, was involved in Class A's own defeat.

It's because...

" Sakayanagi sabotaged her own classmate."

" Kukuku.....you sneaky crippled kindergartener..." Ryuen sneers at Sakayanagi.

Ichinose turns to Sakayanagi with a face full of alarm,

" Sakayanagi-san, is that really true? " Ichinose asked in disbelief.

" Yes, indeed. I'm quite pleased to hear that the traitor of Class D managed to find that out. Impressive!" She claps softly.

" But why? Why would you go to such lengths to bring Katsuragi-kun down?" Ichinose asked, curiously.

" That's unbearably easy to answer, Ichinose-san." Sakayanagi smiles and her violet eyes shimmered with dominance,

" I intend to take full control and leadership of Class A. And to do that, I must prove that Katsuragi was not fit for such a role and I succeeded." Sakayanagi smiles at me, " And it's all thanks to indirect assistance from Ayanaokoji Kiyotaka." She said.

The four of in this table (including Kamuro) were painfully aware of the infighting raging on in Class A earlier in the month. Two factions, the Sakayanagi faction and the Katsuragi faction, the class was torn on who to elect as the true leader of Class A. That's why Sakayanagi implanted her own followers into causing panic in Katsuragi's inner being while also escaping herself from the situation by volunteering to be voted out. Thus, Katsuragi had limited people to trust and limited options to take due to his defensive nature which was not a good fit for someone with the role of class murderer.

20 minutes...

I'd better start moving on to Class B.

" Moving on to Class B, it was a bit tricky at first since Ichinose united her class very well and they displayed exceptional unity that none of our classes could compare to as of now." I begin my opening.

Ichinose seemed happy to hear my small praise for her efforts.

" Class B's murderer was Amikura Mako. It was hard to confirm my suspicions on her due to the fact that Class B...all of Class B...it was if they operated with one brain and one personality. Let me put it this way, it was as if they were clones of Ichinose Honami. It was hard to identify the killer because all of them rotated between groups each day and they all had the same type of aura as an ordinary citizen so their murderer blended in well. "

" Then how did you find out the murderer?" Sakayanagi asked, amused.

" I found out the murderer when I met up with Ichinose on the fourth round." I looked to the girl in question.

"Oh...." Ichinose begins to chuckle, " I understand. It seems I made a mistake, huh..." She says.

I nodded.

" Mind elaborating?" Ryuen asked.

" Ichinose and I encountered the body of an unconscious class C student during round 4." I better not say anything about the grin and the glimmer in her eyes back then, " When we investigated the area, she made a mistake." I look to her.

She scratches the back of her head, winks, and hangs her tongue out cutely.

" Ahaha~ Yeah...I did..."

" Yajima of Class C...." I managed to identify once I turned her over.

" Ah....this is really strange..." Ichinose said.

" Indeed. A lot of Class C students are actually getting eliminated the most in each round. By the murderer." I said.

" You kept track too?" She asks.

I nodded. " You as well?"

She nods too before looking back at the unconscious body.

" I'd better inform Mako-chan..." I hear her mumble quietly.

Mako? Amikura Mako?

" How careless of you, Ichinose-san." Sakayanagi comments.

" Yep, you're right...that was careless." She smiles awkwardly.

" I thought you were sharper than that, Ichinose. I didn't think you'd be that much of a fool." Ryuen snorts.

" Hey!" Ichinose pouts.

Fool, huh....

For some reason, that's not an unacceptable answer. I silently kept my gaze on Ichinose as she tried to fight off Ryuen's insults. Did she really make a genuine mistake? Or was it intentional. Or maybe it is the truth, and I simply want a different truth to be realized because of the time I witnessed that near-psychotic grin on Ichinose's face....

" Anyways," I decided to interject, " The rest of the story is self-explanatory from there. I'm confident that you two can guess where it went."

" What? You guys fucked in a closet?" Ryuen asked, smirking.

" RYUEN-KUN!" Ichinose's face turned red and she glares at Ryuen.

" What? That's where I assumed it was going." Ryuen shrugs. Clearly, it wasn't his real assumption, he simply enjoys messing with Ichinose.

" How lewd of you, Ichinose-san..." Sakayanagi added more fuel to the fire.

" YOU GUYS!" Ichinose whined.

10 minutes....

" You three can fight later but please allow me to continue. We only have 10 minutes left." I interrupted them.

They stopped talking and nodded to me.

" All right, last but not least, we have Class C-

" You mean ' **Class D**', Ayanokoji-kun?" Sakayanagi mocks.

" You're walking on thin ice, Sakayanagi.....oh wait," Ryuen puts a hand to his mouth, feigning shock and realization.

" **You can't even walk.**"

"..." Sakayanagi's eyebrow was twitching in irritation. But she's mercilessly provoking Ryuen at each chance she gets, it's only to be expected if Ryuen provokes back with his own bullet.

" Guys, please let Ayanokoji-kun speak..." Ichinose sighs. *Thank you very much, Ichinose.*

I quickly took the chance to continue once things cooled down for a bit,

" To be honest, Ryuen almost beat me. If I hadn't noticed my soon-to-be mistake at the time, then I would have lost from there. I only had one shot." I said.

" But you managed to counter the fuck out of me just in time...." Ryuen slams his fist on the table with a grin. " You really are a bastard. But a challenging and interesting one."

" So, how did Ayanokoji-kun exactly ' counter' Ryuen-kun?" Ichinose asks.

" Luck. Pure luck. You see, my task at the time said that I am to convince a classmate to vote for the wrong person. But before that, I will tell you Ryuen's movements behind the scenes, or, " I look to the man in question, " Would you like to tell them instead?"

" Why not?" He shrugs and I nodded, letting him take the stage for now.

" My plan was to eliminate as many classmates as I can via class murderer. And then as for the voting elimination, I was focused on eliminating and narrowing down the class A students. I hid myself from the public eye when everyone was walking around the mall, I took the gun from my class murderer and decided to play the role itself. After all, since they received the mere roll, the mere title....I wondered if it was possible to do it myself while the real class murderer conceals themselves. So that's what I did." Ryuen explained in detail.

We nod.

" I see....so you intentionally tried to garner suspicion towards yourself in an attempt to trick all the classes?" Ichinose asks.

" Bingo. And I would have gotten away with it if it weren't for this meddling piece of shit." He points to me. Ouch.

"Anyways, just when I thought I tricked Ayanokoji and Kushida into thinking it was me....he decides to vote Hirata at the last moment." Ryuen sighs in annoyance.

" Mhm, and I'm sure you're curious about how I discovered Kaneda is your class murderer?" I ask the obvious.

" No shit sherlock." He responds with sarcasm.

" Well, it was a lot simple than I'd initially thought. You see, Kaneda may be an excellent student via academics but he seems to have relatively weak memory." I told him.

Ryuen;s eyes widened at that. "What?" It seems like he wasn't aware of it.

" He always carries his notebook around. That's what I noticed and he often reads or writes in it, doesn't he?" I ask.

" Yes, but how did you notice that? How did you two even interact?" He asks.

" We didn't. Kushida just shared information of your class to us during the 5th round discussion. They were intent on voting you out in the next round but some wanted to know a little bit more of the other students in your class. Kaneda's name came up in the conversation and Kushida spilled to us that he has bad memory." I said.

Ryuen grits his teeth at that before releasing a frustrated sigh.

" Fufu~ Seems like you don't know your classmates as well as you thought~" Sakayanagi laughs.

"Ryuen-kun, you should to reach out to them more instead of enslaving them with the power of violence." Ichinose comments.

" Shut up. Both of you." He ordered.

" Anyways, I tested that theory by bumping into him the next day and knocking down the notebook from his hand and guess what I saw on the latest page? ' *Kaneda Satoru, remember, YOU are the class murderer,* ' Isn't that nice?" I said.

" That bastard should've said something about this. " Ryuen was clearly annoyed with his own classmate's mishap.

I sighed loudly.

" Well, that's how I discovered all three identities and the method I used to win. " I look to the clock and I had 2 minutes to spare.

" This was an enlightening conversation. It was nice to talk to you, Ayanokoji-kun." Sakayanagi said to me with eyes of recognition, but I shan't dare make a comment about it.

" Same here. It's fun discussing our previous plans and motives for the game. We should do this more often!" Ichinose, enthusiastic as ever.

" This was beneficial information. Seems like I have to look out for Ayanokoji the most, after all, his presence is that of a ghost due to his blank face and monotone voice. No wonder nobody noticed him for shit." Ryuen didn't dare miss the chance to aim an insult towards me.

" Well, I'm glad you three are satisfied." I said before standing up, " But I'm afraid class is about to start, so I best be going or else I'll be late." I said and walked away from the table full of these troublesome individuals.

A week had passed ever since I had that **conversation with my adversaries....**

A week had passed since my classmates with the exception of Horikita and Kushida, had begun ignoring my existence as much as possible. (Though, Horikita doesn't talk to me anymore but she acknowledges my presence.)

A week had passed since I'd embraced my title as the outcast and traitor of Class D

But now....

There seems to be another dreadful game approaching....

We were gathered at the gymnasium and watched as Lumine stood on the podium with an excited expression...

She picks up the microphone....

" Let's begin Game 2 : Truth or Lie! "

CHAPTER END!

Wew! I hope their first conversation was a fun read.

Anyways, the next game will begin in the next chapter!

So look forward to it!

Also, I completely winged the explanation that I wrote for Kiyo to fill in the missing context from round 1 to the last round in Game 1. I hope it made sense lmao.

If not, then that's that.

KawaiiLumine, out!

Episode 9: Truth or Lies

Ayanokoji PoV

Truth or Lie....

Everybody showed looks of dread, the mere title of the game sounds completely innocent similar to that of a mere children's game. But everyone knew that 'innocent games' are the last thing you should expect from Director Lumine.

"I'll begin the explanation," Lumine announces with a tint of her signature excitement within her golden eyes as she continued, "The game is relatively simple and incredibly short! I'm confident that we can finish it today!" She starts.

"Anyway, the game goes like this; There will be 5 rounds, and in each round, one student from each class will step up to the plate according to my personal selection. Once they are on the plate, then I will either state a lie or a truth that's related to the students selected. For example,"

She points to me with a look I wasn't comfortable with. This was intentional. Everybody turned to me.

"I will pick Ayanokoji Kiyotaka of Class D to step up to the plate. And I will state a truth or a lie.....hmm.....let's see..." She begins thinking, but we both knew that she already had an example in mind the moment she selected me.

" Ah, I got it!" Her expression lights up.

" **Truth or Lie: Ayanokoji Kiyotaka was born from a secret facility in which they mold young, weak, and talentless children into the ' perfect' masterpiece of a human being. To possess knowledge and strength that is equal to or succeeds past those of prodigies or ' natural genius'. "**

The room was silent....

I felt a certain gaze on me. But I didn't dare attempt to see who it was, for I am currently trying to keep my calm as much as possible. This wasn't part of the deal, and that was the problem. I should've added the agreement in which my past may not be used by her however she pleases, even if it's a mere example that these students are unbeknownst to.

This was still a big risk. And this woman **loves** taking risks....

" Huh? That's false obviously!" Yahiko loudly stated.

" Yeah, I'm with Yahiko on that one. Even if it's an example, that's just unbelievable! I mean, it's like a backstory for a manga mc!" Another person added.

Everyone listened to their words and turned to Lumine to also share their disagreement, brushing away such a ridiculous ' question' regarding a guy like me. Lumine smiled,completely amused, her eyes glanced straight at mine for a few seconds and in her gaze I understood her message.

' **Don't worry, I know what I'm doing.**' That's the message she gave me through her gaze alone.

She's incredibly sly.

" It's just an example, you guys!" She cheerfully cleared up, " Anyways, continuing on with my explanation. If I use Ayanokoji as an example with that truth or lie question. Your class must agree to

vote on whether or not the statement was a lie or truth. If you get the answer right, then you gain class points, and if you get the answer wrong there **WILL** be **consequences**."

As soon as she said that, everyone's expressions stiffened and the air turned cold. Everyone is forced to faithfully abide Lumine's instructions or else they will suffer her wrath.

" Now, just to add more detail into the voting system. It's majority over minority, so you don't have to worry about whether or not I decided to reuse the previous voting system during the first game. So overall, it's all down to class discussions." She said.

I felt my classmates sighing in relief while few of them glanced at me with wariness. They must've thought that I'd betray the class when given the chance again. Well, it's unfortunate to them that I've already procured a plan to achieve my goal for this game....

" Also, it's not I who will confirm whether or not your answer is correct." She suddenly stated.

" It'll be the student of whom I called up to the plate, who will confirm your answers."

" Huh?" Everyone let out a sound of surprise.

Lumine gives a sinister smile.

" And if you managed to get the correct answer....and the student on the plate tries to deny it....then.....you'll lose 400 class points."

" HUH?!"

" Ahaha! But don't worry! That rule will only apply to the student's respective class! So if a student from Class D, for example, were to deny the correct answer that I'm well-aware of. Then that student's class will suffer a loss of 400 class points AND an additional consequence! Isn't that fun?" She smiled as if nothing was

completely wrong with her statement. And truthfully, there was no flaw. This was her game to choose and for us to play.

" So even though you won't have to worry about the voting process, in exchange, you're gonna have to worry about the student on the plate! " She gives us a thumbs up with a wink,

" So be sure to work together in on this! Because the rewards seem more enticing than dignity! At least in my eyes." She said and pressed the remote which activated the projection and on the screen it showed us a presentation of the rewards.

" You see, when I said that this game will most likely end in one day. I meant it. Because the first class that submits their answer and ends up being correct, will steal 300 class points from one of the classes according to their choosing!" She proclaimed.

" And the classes that come after the first class and still manages to get it correct? They only earn 100 class points without being given the ability to steal from the other classes class points. Still sounds pretty reasonable, right?" She added.

Nobody seemed to show any objection. The rewards are bountiful and easily claimed if your class just cooperates properly and gets the correct answer while also making sure your own selected classmate does not deny the correct answer when placed in front of them. An interesting proposal...

Except, what's the catch? Where's the ' death' in this type of game? Well, perhaps I don't have to think about it for now since knowing Lumine, she'll give us the answer once the game starts. However, I have no intention of receiving her answer....so...

" All right! Nobody seems to object! So let Game 2 begin-"

" Hold on." I said aloud and raised my hand.

She pauses and looks at me curiously, and everyone soon wore the same expression as they stared at me.

" I would like to use my protection point to skip this game."

I have no choice but to use it now. To preserve the mystery I hold before I ' die' along with the rest of them in the early stages.

" Oh? So early! Are you sure you wanna use it up now, Mr. Traitor?" She giggles.

" Yes please." I lowered my hand.

My classmates muttered to themselves in confusion for my decision. They're talking about how stupid it is for me to use my protection point this early after having recently obtained it, but they're glad that they won't have to worry about me suddenly ' betraying' them in this game because-

" Just so you know, once you skip, you are immediately disqualified from the game and gain nothing. So, are you REALLY sure?" She asks again.

" I'm sure" After all, in this case by gaining nothing, I also lose nothing. I'm only in this for my own benefit.

" All right, then! Ayanokoji Kiyotaka has skipped the game!" Lumine agrees and begins typing on her phone.

My phone notified me soon after, and I quickly checked the message.

[ONE PROTECTION POINT (PRIVATE) HAS BEEN DEDUCTED FROM AYANOKOJI KIYOTAKA

CURRENT AMOUNT: 0]

Guess there's no turning back. I placed my phone back in my blazer pocket. There is only one outcome of this game that I'm confident will come to fruition. The outcome I'm thinking of will not end in Class C's victory, or any class for that matter.

Everyone will suffer in this game except for me. In fact, this game will likely provide me answers to questions I haven't thought of if things play out the way I predicted.

The screen lit up and on it was the current amount of class points for each class.

[Class A - 700 cp

Class B - 660 cp

Class C (D) - 500 cp

Class D (C) - 360 cp]

The scores will change drastically with the way this game was set up. Another factor that will in the changes is Director Lumine herself. The best I can hope for, is for Class D to remain honest as possible and lose less points than the other classes.

" All right! Let's begin the game for real!" She announces.

"Remember, 5 rounds! " She reminds us before calling out the first student, " For Class A, I'd like to select **Kamuro Masumi!**" She says.

Ah, the girl who accompanies Sakayanagi. The purple haired girl reluctantly stood on the stage, arms crossed, and a scowl to top it all off.

My classmates huddled up while I stood separated from them since I've opted to skip the game.

" **Truth or Lie: Kamuro Masumi frequently shoplifts!**" The first statement was said.

Seconds after, one class had already submitted their answer.

" Woah! That was fast, Class A! Well, she IS your classmate so it's only expected that you guys would know the answer." Lumine chuckles.

Though, when I look at the class A students' faces, they don't seem like they really know the answer. Rather, it seems to me that Sakayanagi definitely knew the answer and told her classmates to vote what she decides on, it looks to me that Katsuragi no longer has much influence over the class to hear out his opinion.

" What do you guys think?" I hear Hirata ask our classmates. I glanced at them and decided to listen in.

" I think it's a lie. I mean, what reason does Kamuro have to shoplift? She's class A and she has tons of private points, no?" Keisei pointed out. Indeed, she is a class A student and for normal people, once you have money, there'd be no reason to attempt such a risky thing.

" Yeah...that's what I'm thinking too." Matsushita said.

" Then we can submit that? " Karuizawa asked.

Everyone else in the huddle shared sounds of agreement, They had no arguments or theories that they'd like to bring up since the answer is ' obvious'. However, they're doomed to lose this round unless someone brings up another close possibility that could influence their answer.

" Hirata-kun, I think everyone is in agreement." Kushida said.

Hirata nods. " I see, if that's the case....then we'll vote lie." He says with finality.

I sighed. Noticing the obvious points are good, however, the 'obvious' answer is based on the general reasoning and logic of most people who abide by the law. They're completely forgetting the people who disregard the law and operate on their own logic, their own desires, their own goals. Common-sense is a term used to refer

to a general standpoint for most people. What is often done in the past and present will be deemed "common-sense" and the wider it spreads, the more concrete it gets.

However, like all concepts, it has a flaw. A flaw I've already pointed out with the 'obvious' points.

Seems like Class D will lose this one-

"Hold on. Before you submit the answer, would you please hear me out?" A voice interrupted.

I opened my eyes and my gaze landed on Horikita who looked at her classmates with narrowed eyes.

"I don't believe that the statement is a lie." She said.

"Huh?" My classmates raised their brows at her sudden declaration.

"Why?" Keisei was the first to ask.

"Yukimura-kun, you made a good point regarding Kamuro's position as a Class A student and I'm also certain that she has a lot of points and that we're able to assume that there's no particular reason for her to do something like 'shoplifting'." Horikita said.

" So you agree-" But Horikita interrupts, holding up a finger signalling him to shut up.

" However, that could be a trick. You see, sometimes the ' obvious' answers aren't the correct ones. We know nothing about Kamuro and since we know nothing, we need to take in account of another possibility." She says.

" And that possibility is what?" Karuizawa asked, getting impatient. No, rather, there's another hidden emotion on Karuizawa's face....almost as if she's anxious. It's the type of anxiousness when you're afraid of getting pushed into a corner, and this game was the perfect set up for such a thing.

I wonder, does she too have a secret that she wishes to bury deep down in the crevices of her mind? Never to be brought up to light?

" The possibility of Kamuro being the type of person to 'shoplift' for fun. For the thrill." Horikita answers.

" Huh? That sounds stupid..." Sato comments.

" Oh....hmm...Horikita-san has a point..." Okitani said.

" It sounds stupid to people like us who abide by the rules, but there are still those who likes to test the limits. How far can they stretch the rules before they end up getting caught? That's the type

of thrill that Director Lumine herself is reveling in by keeping us hostage and threatening us to play her games. " Horikita adds.

I look towards Lumine who was currently keeping her same smile. She noticed my gaze and her grin widened, I immediately averted my eyes. I'd better not look at her for too long or else she might try something that could risk our relationship being exposed.

"...Well, it does sound plausible and you've provided us with good points." Keisei said.

" Then, please, let's vote for truth-"

" **However....**"

" Huh?"

Keisei glares at her.

" Why should we listen to someone....who decided to surrender herself to **him**." He points at me with disgust.

Our classmates looked suprised and they also began narrowing their eyes towards Horikita.

" He has a point....could it be that Horikita-san is trying to

sabotage us? " Hasebe said.

" No wait-" Horikita tried to speak up but she was constantly interrupted.

" Right, she was willing to side with Ayanokoji that day..."

" She even kneeled, pfft..."

" What a loser."

" She has the audacity to even speak up....I can't believe almost forgotten about the **second** traitor in our class. " They laughed.

Horikita's lips closed to a thin line as she clenched her fist. She was displeased but it'll only get worse if she decides to lash out at them and she herself knew that. She was being cornered and nobody is willing to help nor put themselves in danger for someone like....who kneeled and surrendered everything to someone like me.

You were foolish again, Horikita.

" I'm sorry, Horikita. If you didn't throw away your dignity during the end of Game 1, then I would've listened to you. Truly, I would." Keisei sighs.

" ..." Horikita sighs in defeat.

Keisei turns to the Hirata, " Anyways, Hirata, let's-"

" Done." Hirata said with a smile.

" Huh? Done?" Keisei's eyes widened and he quickly walked towards him, " W-Wait, what did you vote?"

Hirata chuckles before looking to the side and glancing at Horikita. He then returns his gaze to Keisei.

" Truth."

" YOU WHAT?!" Our classmates yelled at the same time, wearing shocked expressions.

" I believe Horikita-san's answer is right." Hirata says,

" Maybe her kneeling back then...was an act of desperation on her end. And weren't we also desperate? Our class has argued against each other so many times...." Hirata sighs,

" And you all decided to push Ayanokoji-kun away as well, when he's the one who brought us 500 points through the traitor route. His true motives are unsure to me, but at the very least, we were rewarded due to his actions, as much as I don't approve of it." Hirata said.

He then places a hand on Keisei's shoulder.

" Ayanokoji-kun doesn't seem like he wants to reach out and help us anymore, even if we are still his classmates. But Horikita-san is still here, is she not? She's giving us her opinion with good points. And I decided to vote truth, regardless of whether or not it was correct or wrong, because I wanted to do it as an act of truth between our class and Horikita and if possible, I hope it can extend to Ayanokoji-kun as well." He explained his reasons quite nicely. Our classmates looked wholly convinced or at the process of it.

"..." Keisei says nothing and decides to turn towards the director.

Horikita looked suprised but there was gratitude for her eyes and a sigh of relief from her mouth. Though, she probably hates being indebted to Hirata even if he did it out of goodwill and nothing more. It could still bother her mind, but for now, that didn't matter.

" The answer is....." Lumine paused for suspense.

" TRUTH!"

My classmates gasped. They were praying that Horikita's answer was correct and it'd been answered in their favor. Horikita sighs in relief that her answer had been submitted by Hirata, though it was an impromptu decision.

" Oh wait! Ah, I forgot!" Lumine bonks the side of her head, " I'm supposed to let Kamuro Masumi confirm it....ehm..." Lumine looks at Kamuro.

" Is it a truth or a lie?" She asked the purple haired girl.

Kamuro sighs, " Truth..." She muttered.

" All right~! That's correct! " Lumine said, " I won't mess up for the next student. Kamuro Masumi, you may return to your class."

Kamuro nods and walks off stage towards her class. My class may have gotten it right but Class A has won the advantage for this round by answering first.

" Well then, Class A, please select the class in whom you want to rob them of 300 class points? " Lumine asked.

My classmates gulped. It'd be very ideal to target the lowest class

and eradicate all their chances of ascending, even if we aren't class D now, we're still relatively weak compared to the new Class D which they used to be Class C. My classmates may have gotten along better with each other but their relationship with Horikita is stiff while their relationship with me no longer exists.

" Hmm..." Sakayanagi hummed. It seems like she'll answer on the behalf of the class.

" **Class D.**"

She smiles.

" Oh you little shit...kuku..." Ryuen chuckled in amusement as his eyes glared at Sakayanagi similar to that of a snake.

" Very well! Class D has been deducted **300 class points** and added to Class A! Class C is now left with **60 class points!** How poor!" Lumine mocks and laughs.

Sakayanagi also laughs. Could they be siblings? To laugh at those below them without a care?

Class A's class point began changing on the board and so did Class D's....

[Class A - 700 cp - (+ 300) 1000 cp]

[Class D - 360 cp - (- 300) 60 cp]

Not looking good for Ryuen's class, but he doesn't seem to be too aggravated by it. If I could guess, then Ryuen is most likely aiming for the long term victory or to describe it better with a quote, "**It does not matter how many battles you've fought and loss, so long as you win the war.**" That's his mindset going into this, especially against someone who possesses intelligence like Sakayanagi.

I wonder if he can truly pull it off...

I'm excited to see how Ryuen will overcome his odds in this game and more in the future.

Other than that, my classmates released sighs of relief that they'd been spared from losing 300 class points and getting demoted back to Class D. This was the best outcome for this round in their eyes.

Lumine claps her hands, " All right! Wasn't that fun? Stealing class points and worsening their situation? Ahaha!" She chuckles loudly.

" Anyways, it seems like all the classes guessed the answer but only Class A was given the privilege to steal while the rest of the classes gain 100 points....wait, oh right, that also includes Class D since they got it right." She shrugs.

Seems like she's dead set on following her rules. That's good, this makes things a bit fairer.

[Class B - 660 cp - (+100) 760]

[Class C - 500 cp - (+100) 600 cp]

[Class D - 60 cp - (+100) 160 cp]

" All right, next student from Class B. I select **Amikura Mako** to step up on the stage!" Lumine calls.

" You can count on us, Mako-chan."

" Don't fret about this, Amikura. We're going to win as long as we stay honest in this game."

" If the statement is embarrassing to confirm the truth or lie, then please know that we won't judge you for it!"

The boys and girl in Class B showed their support for Amikura Mako, a pretty girl with long black hair tied into a ponytail with amethyst colored eyes. The girl in question smiled and nodded to her classmates before stepping up to the stage.

Lumine smirks.

" Truth or Lie: Amikura Mako often did compensated dating back in junior high."

" H-Huh?" Amikura's eyes widened as she turned to look at Lumine, in which the latter responded with a smile of fake innocence.

" What..?"

" So she's been on dates with old men?"

" I didn't think she'd be the type of girl to go that low..."

" Maybe she has a good reason?"

" Or maybe she's just a whore..."

These were the words muttered by everyone in the gymnasium. All the classes were caught off-guard by such a question and are truly left questioning it's accuracy to the truth, or if it's just a lie

that the director knew would get them thinking. Only Class B seemed to keep their calm, as they listened to Ichinose's words.

I couldn't hear what they were saying, but if I were to guess, then Ichinose must be reassuring them that it's a false statement and then encouraging them to vote for false. Though, I wonder if the statement truly is false.....**in every person, there's a person you don't know....**

What if Amikura actually did this and got shamed for it back in her junior high? Compensated dating was usually associated with girls in their teenage years going out with older men in exchange for money. This might just be a side of Amikura that she's been trying to forget or hide.

" Er....What should we do...?" Mii-chan asked nervously.

" Why don't we just vote for truth..." Ijuin muttered in a hesitant manner.

" Hell no! What if we're wrong because we voted truth? Is anyone here close with Amikura-san. " Shinohara asked.

" Wait, Kushida-chan is close to everyone. Maybe she knows!" Okitani pointed out.

Everyone now looked towards Kushida.

" Um..." Kushida seemed uncomfortable. Is it because she's being placed on the spot about a sensitive topic? Or is the statement actually true, that Amikura Mako often does compensated dating.

" To be honest....I don't Amikura-san is the type of girl to do that.

She's pretty happy go lucky and she's very serious about romance the few times we've discussed it together. She believes that she should wait for the right person.....so I doubt she'd ever involve herself in things such as Compensated Dating." Kushida said.

From the way Kushida described Amikura, it does seem highly unlikely that the statement were to be true. However, Kushida is also not extremely close with Amikura.....in all honesty, only Class B will know the definitive answer or maybe not.

" Class B, D , and A has submitted their answers! " Lumine announced, " Waiting on you, Class C~"

As expected, Class B answered quickly but it seems like my class is taking too long in making a decision. They need to hurry it up.

" Ah, fine! Let's just go with lie!" One of my classmates said and the others quickly nodded simply going with the flow as Hirata proceeded to submit our vote.

" Amikura? Your answer?" Lumine looked towards Amikura.

Amikura sighed in relief before giving her class a big smile and a thumbs up.

" Lie! The statement is a lie!" She said, proudly.

" Correct!" Lumine did the final confirmation.

" Class B, since you answered first. Who will it be next?" Lumine asked, referring to the steal option.

Ichinose smiles. " Class A." She said.

The answer was obvious. Now Class B will become Class A.

" Very well! 300 class points deducted from Class A and added to Class B, oh, and look! It seems Class B will become the new Class A. Congratulations!" Lumine cheers.

The score board begins calculating the results...

[Class A - 1000 cp - (Demoted to Class B and - 300 p) 700 cp

Class B -760 cp - (Ascended to Class A, and +300 cp) 1060 cp

Class C - 600 cp - (+100 cp) - 700 cp

Class D - 160 cp - (+100 cp) 260 cp]

My class is currently tied with the newly demoted Class A, but they still kept the rank of Class B for now it seems. the new Class A has a higher lead than its predecessor which only had 1000 class points. If Class B gains the advantage win again then this game will surely get difficult and we could end up getting swept by Ichinose and her class.

" Fufu, well played, Ichinose-san." Sakayanagi comments.

" Hehe! " Ichinose winks. " Sorry, but we're the top of the hill

now, Sakayanagi-san." Ichinose replied with pride.

" Well then..." Sakayanagi's eyes glimmer with malicious intent, " Do your best on enduring our attacks for now. This is the only first round, after all~"

" You can bet on it." Ichinose returns Sakayanagi's gaze with an inviting smile.

Now Sakayanagi must be envying the relationship Ichinose has with her class at this very moment. If Ichinose somehow possesses the cunningness of Ryuen and the overall intelligence of Sakayanagi then there's no doubt....along with her unifying ability and charisma.....she'd be the perfect student. The strongest person in our year.

And an interesting challenge....

" All right, let's move on with Class D!" Lumine points to the class D students.

" I call upon **Ibuki Mio** to step on the stage!"

I watched as a girl with short blue hair and purple eyes stepping up to the stage with a resting frown on her face.

Lumine begins the statement...

" **Truth or Lie: Back at her neighborhood, Ibuki Mio was notorious for beating up gyaru girls simply because she was jealous of their confidence and style!"**

Ibuki's eye twitched at that.

But she kept silent.

" Eh? What the heck?" Karuizawa, a gyaru girl, expressed her concern.

" Geez...isn't that a very dumb reason if the statement were to be true?" Matsushita said.

" So petty..." Mori added.

The few gyarus in our class expressed their concern about the statement, getting worried for themselves, but they didn't say anything about it other than that. They went back to huddling with the rest of my classmates.

" Kushida-san, are you close with Ibuki?" Karuizawa asks.

" Hm...no. As far as I know, Ibuki-san operated like a lone wolf, but I'm sure she's a kind girl-" Kushida tried to answer but was promptly interrupted by Horikita.

" You're clouding your judgement by often seeing the ' best ' in people. Please stay objective on the matter." Horikita said.

Kushida looks towards Horikita but the latter did not return her gaze. Kushida giggles and smiles,

" Well, I can't really help it." but then she stops smiling, " But I'm really serious about it. I don't think Ibuki-san would do that....she doesn't like to be bothered so why would she go looking for a fight?"Kushida said.

" Mm...that sounds plausible. " Was all Horikita replied.

Kushida smiles fondly in response, she must be pleased to speak to her " best friend" again. I still have doubts about their stories but the fact remains that they belonged to the same junior high and Horikita has ' heard' of Kushida but wasn't well-acquainted with her. While the latter, Kushida, claims that she used to be best friends with Horikita.

" Well, I don't know much people outside from this class." Keisei admits, " but I think we should follow Kushida's answer."

" Yeah....I'm scared that we might be wrong but this is the best option, right?" A girl named Maezono said.

" If Hirata-kun also agrees then I see no issue....." Kishita said.

The boys also shrugged and nodded, it seems like the decision is up to Kushida or Hirata now.

" Well, only Kushida-san knows even the tiniest bit of information about Ibuki-san. So let's go with her answer and agree on lie." Hirata said.

" Hai." Everyone agreed.

Our class managed to vote second while Class C was obviously first. I wonder when this cycle would break instead of repeating? Each time a student from their class steps up, the student's respective class always places first in voting. If another class were to vote first instead of the student's own class, then it might be a game changer and the pace will accelerate.

" Lies." Ibuki blandly stated.

" Correct!" Lumine confirms.

Without hesitation, Ryuen quickly brings up his choice.

" Class B!" He barked his choice.

Lumine nods, " All right then!"

Strange, it's suprising to see that Ryuen would choose to deduct from Sakayanagi's class rather than Ichinose's. Was it simply revenge from his end for all the times Sakayanagi threw verbal jabs and also when she deducted his class's points down to 60?

The score board begins changing again....

[Class A - 1060 cp - (+ 100) 1160 cp]

[Class B - 700 cp - (Demoted to Class D, -300) 400 cp]

[Class C - 700 cp (promoted to Class B, + 100) 800 cp]

" Take that ya' crippled kindergartner!" Ryuen laughed loudly.

" How immature..." Sakayanagi sighs, though I can sense the slightest bit of anger against Ryuen's provocation.

" We're Class B!" My classmates cheered.

" Is this really happening? This game has been in our favor for three turns! Amazing!" Miyamoto expressed his happy confusion.

" We can't celebrate just yet." Keisei stops them, " The scores keep drastically changing within 3 turns....we have 5 rounds.....so we need to survive and make sure we don't get demoted back to Class D. " Keisei says.

" Nah, we got this in the bag." Sudo brushes away Keisei's concerns.

I thought Keisei would fuss about that, but he held his tongue and just sighed, muttering another warning for our classmates.

" I'm really worried about our lead.....there's actually a lot of pressure in being Class B which is a rank below Class A." Matsushita worries as she places a hand on her chest.

" Don't be so anxious, Matsushita-san, we gotta take all this in positively!" Sato said.

The girls nodded to that. In a few ways, Sato is right, the current mindset can affect your decision-making and if you stay negative or become too anxious, then it's very likely you'll mess up.

Well then...

I wonder who Lumine will pick for our class. She seemed to skip over us a while ago to go straight to Ryuen's class with the intention of saving us for last.

But why? If that IS the case....then I can only assume that something troublesome is about to occur...

" All right! Now we can wrap up the first round with Class C! And for Class C, I'd love to call **Horikita Suzune** to the stage! " Lumine calls.

" Don't worry, Horikita-san. We won't lose our lead." Hirata assured Horikita and the latter silently nods to his assurance.

Our classmates watched as Horikita walked up to the stage with light footsteps and a calm expression. She didn't dare speak or show any visible signs of anxiety or frustration or any negative emotion in general. She wants to go through this in a stoic matter, I assume.

" Hehe...." Lumine suddenly giggles and quickly covers her mouth. " Hehe s-sorry!" She tries to hold back her laughter but little by little it keeps sounding louder and louder.

This really isn't good...

" HAHAAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH! LET'S BEGIN WITH THE STATEMENT!" She loudly announced with maniacal laughter.

" TRUTH OR LIE: HORIKITA SUZUNE IS NOT A VIRGIN!"

" Huh?"

CHAPTER END!

Wew, finally finished this episode!

I was supposed to update this fic yesterday but I had to attend a party....and mobile wattpad was shitty and kept ruining my spacing. So I just gave up and decided to finish it now.

I hope you enjoyed this episode!

Also I hope you like the way this game and game 1 was set up because I rilly am trying my best to....write original games or at the very least, original rules.

Anyways,

With that, I'll see u in the next episode!

SadisticLumine, out~

Episode 10: Broken Bond.

There was a question floating around in the comments regarding the attire that Lumine is wearing throughout this fic.

And then timmy begins...immediately....assuming that she's wearing a bunny-girl outfit-

But anyways! Here is the outfit she's wearing for your imagination.

....*drools a bit but quickly wipes it away*

L-Let's start the episode!

Ayanokoji PoV

" TRUTH OR LIE: HORIKITA SUZUNE IS NOT A VIRGIN! "

What a bold statement...

Everyone was silent, it seems they were caught off-guard by such a statement as vulgar as this one.

" H-Huh?" My classmates registered the shock.

" Hey now! Don't waste time, all of you, huddle up already!" Lumine says.

The classes slowly recovered from the shock and then began to huddle up with those within their respective classes. Although I wondered what the other classes might think of such a bold statement, but my interest lies within those in Class D, I wondered how they'll go through this one.

*Will they vote **Truth**? Will they vote **Lie**?*

Truly, I wonder....

" Everyone? Let's try to put aside our shock for now and think rationally, okay? I know it sounds suprising but if we let it distract us, then it's likely we'll lose our lead." Hirata decided to speak up first in an attempt to set a pace for his classmates.

" That was so sudden..." Matsushita comments.

" I expected a ton of possibilities....but not that..." Keisei sighs. Though I'm sure that feeling is mutual for everyone present in this room.

" Horikita-san....doesn't seem to be that type of person...." Mii-chan shares her opinion.

" Same here. Even if she is prickly, it's kind of hard to imagine Horikita-san losing her virginity at this age....." Sato agreed.

" Does Kushida-san get along with Horikita-san?" One of the girls asked and everyone immediately turned to look at Kushida.

"What do you think?" They asked her.

I immediately focused my gaze on Kushida's expression. I will make sure to catch any indication of whether or not she's lying right here and now. This was the moment I was hoping for, the opportunity at long last has arrived, placed under all this pressure from her fellow classmates and the consequences of this game itself if you lie.....it will all unravel. Not just Kushida's secret, not just Horikita's secret, but everyone else's who steps to the plate.

The chances of those 'secrets' being a lie is possible, however, this director loves seeing others suffer. So there's not a single doubt that the director will reveal their disturbing background if they had any.

"I don't think it's true..." Kushida says. I watched her face carefully.

"I don't know Horikita-san that well but-"

Lie.

"-I don't believe she is the type of person to give away her purity just like that. She's a girl like all of us, and none of us want that, now do we?" Kushida smiles to make her words sound more convincing.

From what I managed to discern from Kushida's face. I saw her mouth and eyebrow twitch a little bit, probably due to minor stress and major confusion, I also noticed her averting her pupils to the side as she talked before promptly returning it to the people she's trying to convince. Her words didn't sound shaky which suggests that she was telling the truth, but her facial expression was on the contrary because she lied about not knowing Horikita that well.

In conclusion, Kushida Kikyo actually had a close bond with Horikita. And only Kushida knows the true answer of whether or not this statement was a truth or lie.

However...

" So I believe it's a lie." Kushida finally said.

She opted....to say a lie.

" Wait hold on. If we get this wrong then we'll lose points, right?" Miyamoto raise his hand and gained the attention of his classmates.

" Yes." Keisei answered.

" Kushida-chan says that she's not particularly close with Horikita. I'm sure none of us are close with her to even make a good basis for our answer. Ayanokoji might be close to her but..." He glances at me before averting soon after, " He's skipped the game so he couldn't help with shit."

" Then? What's your guess, Miyamoto?" Keisei asked, curiously.

I wondered what Miyamoto had to say. Also, I find it quite strange how the usual dumb student of the class are suddenly speaking up, sharing their ideas, sometimes even making valid points. But I quickly realized that their sudden development must be due to this situation in which we are to participate in random death games with no other escape other than death or graduation (if we ever make it) so it's only due to such pressure that they're slowly on the way to becoming diamonds. Rough diamonds.

But I wonder where this development will lead? Will it turn them into bad people or will it turn them into good people?

" I think it's truth!" Miyamoto exclaimed.

" HAH?!" The girls instantly said, suprised by such a blatant answer.

" Think about it. Didn't she kneel to Ayanokoji so submissively? Not only that, she looked incredibly timid when trying to stop Sudo from beating up Ayanokoji. What if she's some sort of masochist?" Miyamoto stated.

" What?! You're just going to assume that?" Karuizawa asked.

" Yes-"

" Horikita-san lost her brother, dude! What the hell are you spouting out from that mouth of yours! " Hondo suprisingly interjected and places his hand on Miyamoto's shoulder.

" She must've thought that Ayanokoji could help her get back at the director, y'know?" Hondo reasoned.

" Still, she kneeled way too easily! Not an ounce of hesitation from her. She went all the way with it. She must've done it before, heck, maybe even more-" Miyamoto's retort was quickly interrupted by Karuizawa.

" So what? Just because she threw away her dignity just like that, you're just going to assume that she's a slut or something?" Karuizawa seemed angered. The situation was only escalating and getting and further away from the real question at hand.

I looked towards Lumine and found her gazing at our class with excitement in her eyes and a sick grin. She did this on purpose, knowing that my class would act like this.

" Well can you blame?" Miyamoto shot back.

" Grrr! What if Horikita-san just wanted to protect herself, huh? And she realized that Ayanokoji was the best person to go to for protection! " Karuizawa suddenly said. But when I looked into her

eyes, I saw nothing but familiarity, honesty, and raw anger correlating to the words she uttered.

" Which only extends the possibility in where she would go as far as to offer her body for protection! " Miyamoto shot back.

" STOP ASSUMING SHIT YOU FAT FUCK!"

Miyamoto was taken aback by Karuizawa's tone. it seems her patience was finally drained and all that's left was a burning fire. but Miyamoto quickly regained control and glared at Karuizawa with hatred in his eyes.

" Assuming? Me? You do that shit all the time too! More times than any of us could count, along with the rest of your bitch friends!" He laughed.

" AND WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING HORIKITA SO MUCH? COULD IT BE THAT YOU'VE DONE THE SAME, KARUIZAWA?!"

Karuizawa's expression froze. The anger in her eyes quickly replaced with nervousness, how peculiar. Miyamoto smiles in victory, thinking that he's finally going to get revenge against the girls and the society's double standards.

As a man, like any man, Miyamoto has pride. And any man would hate their pride getting shattered.

And the people who can easily shatter a man's pride, is none other than a woman. The girls in our class were free to create a ranking list based on the boys of our year, but the boys are forbidden to do the same for the girls. The girls in our class had the advantage in disputes because men were nurtured to treat a woman right, and therefore, it is likely that the man will choose the woman's side.

Though, that only applies if the woman is not a hypocrite. Yet even so, other hypocrites are bound to follow the woman's words and overpower the speech of men. Miyamoto was tired of such hypocrisy and I'm sure that deep down, it also extends to the rest of his fellow male classmates.

"What?" Miyamoto chuckles, "Why so silent? What's with that timid expression! how unlike you, Karuizawa!" Miyamoto mocks.

"Y-You-" Karuizawa tried to respond but Miyamoto quickly cuts her off.

"Did you really offer your body? Are you an ACTUAL whore? You did it for money? protection? Hahaha! I couldn't expect less from a bitch like you-"

"SHUT UP MIYAMOTO-KUN!" Mori hugged the crying Karuizawa. This was a first.

"Miyamoto, stop it!" Hondo shook his friend as if he was crazy.

"Why? I'm sure most of us are feeling the same! And I bet deep down all of thought the statement for Horikita was a truth the moment the director announced it, right?! ALL OF US IMMEDIATELY THOUGHT THE STATEMENT TO BE TRUE!" Miyamoto yelled.

"I-"

"Hondo, be honest. You thought of it as well?" Miyamoto stared at his friend with a serious expression.

Hondo stayed silent, seemingly contemplating on whether or not he should admit or deny.

Haah..

This is exactly how the way things panned out when Ijuin was placed in Miyamoto's position. But there was some truth into Miyamoto's words regarding the first assumption of whether or not Horikita's statement was a truth or lie.

Often, when people hear such bold statements like the loss of virginity for example, especially when it's directed to a girl, then we immediately assume the worst. It doesn't help the fact that Lumine structured the sentence in a way to further escalate our thoughts and first impressions.

For example, if the statement were to have been ; Horikita Suzune IS a virgin.

If that were the statement instead, then we are likely to believe it to be true.

But Lumine decided to say; Horikita Suzune is NOT a virgin.

Thus. our minds would think that to be true but accompanied with some doubt as to give chance for the person in question to deny such a statement. Even if they do present good points, it doesn't erase the possibility that Horikita may have indeed lost her virginity. Until the statement is officially proven to be false, then that's the mindset that the majority would assume.

" Miyamoto-kun, you're going too far." Hirata said in a serious tone.

Miyamoto scoffs at him, " I'm only saying what I think is the truth."

" And that's your opinion-"

" An opinion which is correct, Hirata!" Miyamoto said.

" No it is not. You don't know that. None of us do." Hirata made his way towards Miyamoto, " You shouldn't assume the worst for your classmates. "

" That's what the girls do all the time-"

" This ISN'T about the girls, Miyamoto. " Keisei says, " You're using Horikita's situation as a way to vent out your frustrations on the girls of our class. And it's wasting our time. While I will admit that there's some plausible points in your words, you're not thinking straight and even you yourself are unsure of what you're even saying."

"...." Miyamoto looks down in silence.

Hirata sighs and walks towards his girlfriend, Karuizawa. Placing his hand gently on her shoulder, he began whispering things in order to comfort her like a good boyfriend should.

It seems like the dispute has curtailed with both sides seemingly hurt and affected. The girls, for the most part, were glaring daggers at Miyamoto, recreating the hatred in their eyes when they had done the same to Ijuin on the first game.

Now, I wonder how they'll recover from thi-

" HONDO WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!"

Huh?

Everyone, including myself, turned towards the person that Okitani was screaming at. It was there, in which we discovered too late, that Hondo submitted the votings to Lumine. The latter smiles grimly and accepts it with a smug expression rivalling that of Sakayanagi's, she took one look at the card and she smiled brightly.

" HEY DUDE!" The boys quickly surrounded Hondo, placing their hands on him, gripping him, and then shaking him as if he were crazy.

" WHY THE HELL DID YOU DO THAT?!" Okiya, another male, had asked with urgency.

Hondo just chuckled darkly.

" HEY! YOU BASTARD, WHAT DID YOU DO!" Sudo growled and pulled him by the collar rather forcefully.

" I just submitted the vote..." He said.

" Hondo....what did you vote on?" Keisei asked.

Hondo smiles.

" Truth."

My classmates gasped in shock and I noticed Sudo's grip tighten as he began to wind up a punch-

POW!

" AGH!" Hondo flew to the ground, landing on his back as he tried to back away by crawling as the infuriated Sudo began approaching him.

" YOU IDIOT! YOU'RE COSTING US THE GAME-" Sudo was about to land a kick but the boys quickly pulled him back and held him down.

" RAH! LET GO OF ME!" He yelled.

All of the classes watched as my class crumbled, or rather, desperately trying to piece itself together after taking so many hits of surprise, betrayal, and lies. I wondered if this was how Kushida's classroom looked like when it began self-destructing, for some odd reason, I find this view quite....

.....No.

This is not good. Not one bit.

I would've done something already had I not already opted to skip the game. After all, I'm in it to win but this time I'm simply trying to avoid taking damage. If my class will break into little glass shards, then I'll pick the sharpest one and stab all the others with it.

My eyes landed on Kushida.

So I hope you break too, Kushida.

"Calm down!" The boys tried to tell Sudo but Sudo continued to struggle, his daggering gaze aimed towards Hondo.

"NOT UNTIL I PUNCH THE STUPIDITY OUT OF HIM!" Sudo roars.

"The voting have arrived! Class D was the last to submit!"

Lumine's voice paused our movements. My classmates immediately looked towards Lumine with nervous expressions. The

boys let go of Sudo and Sudo stood up slowly as he too put aside his anger for now in fear of what Lumine will do.

Her golden eyes scanned each of us before she smiles.

" All of you have voted **Truth.**" She announced.

" And **Class A** was the first to submit~" She added.

I looked towards the new Class A, which was Ichinose's class, and her classmates seemed extremely confident especially Ichinose herself. Her happy expression remained unchanging which made me question if it was just an act? Everything about Ichinose Honami being an act?

If I said this out loud, I'd be immediately met with the majority expressing their disagreement with my opinion. After all, Ichinose Honami being anything other than the nice person she is? It sounds crazy, no? But everyone has a side they'd like to keep from others....whether it's good or bad.....It's up to the person in question to define it for us.

" But let's see if all your answers are correct!" Lumine claps her hands and then looks towards Horikita.

" Is it a truth? Or is it a lie? " She asked her.

Horikita's face...how do I describe it....

She looked absolutely stressed as if she were standing on pins and needles.

" It's a lie."

" Oh...? Could you repeat that?" Lumine asked in a low tone.

If Horikita is truly telling the truth, then none of the classes win.

But if she's lying....then our Class will be demoted back to the lowest rank once more.

" It's a lie." Horikita said, this time, she turned to Lumine and looked her in the eye.

" A lie, huh...." Lumine chuckles.

My classmates kept silent. Everyone kept silent as they watched the director's grin widen.

" Indeed.....what you're saying right now is most **definitely** a lie."
She said.

Horikita PoV

" What?" I asked her.

" The correct answer is truth!" The director announces.

I took a step towards her.

" Hey, I-" I was about to defend my case. I was about to tread towards her until she halted my movements by aiming a gun at me.

She giggles.

" What? Are you trying to defend yourself, Horikita? After attempting to cover up the truth with a lie?" She provoked me as if she were in the right.

It's a lie....

The statement is a lie...

I haven't....done ' that' not once....

I glared at her.

" IT IS A LIE!" I yelled at her.

But she laughs in response.

" HAHAAAAAAAA! ARE YOU SERIOUSLY TRYING TO DENY IT?" She asked, her pupils turning into slits. I felt her psychotic nature taking over as she walked towards me, gun still aimed at my head.

*** Step***

Step

step

step

She stopped right in front of me, gun placed right under my chin as she uses it to tilt my head up to look at ceiling. But why- What is she trying to-

" Oh~ Look at this~ This scar on your doesn't look too good, Horikita~" She cooed.

Wait, is she referring to-

SHIT!

I instinctively stepped back, covering my neck as I stared at her apprehensively while she chuckles and looks towards the many classes.

" There was a scar on Horikita Suzune's neck! And guess what? It was a bite mark! Sheesh, the guy she must've fornicated herself with, must have been a freaky one!" She laughs even more,

All eyes were on me.

My classmates looked at me with shocked expressions. Why did they have to vote truth? Did someone betray them? The moment I thought of that, I looked towards Ayanokoji-kun who was the very back and all I found was a blank gaze from him.

It's not him. Someone else did it....

Could it be...

I looked towards **her** with anger.

Kushida Kikyo....

Kushida flinched upon meeting my gaze and quickly averted her eyes like the little useless bitch she is. Ugh, I knew it, I should've done something from the start about her. Meeting her in this same school was a nightmare. She's the only one.....who knows the truth behind the rumors.

" Well, Well, since Horikita decided to lie...." The director glances at me, " it seems like her class will have to suffer a loss of 400 class points."

" HUH?!" My classmates finally processed their shock and expressed their denial.

" W-Wait, b-but we were truth as well!" Hondo cried out.

" A-As much as I don't agree with it but yes!" Matsushita said in a desperate tone.

My classmates began begging but their words weren't heeded as the scoreboard began changing....drastically....

[Class B - 800 points - (Demoted to Class C, - 300 cp) 400 cp]

[Class C - 560 points - (Promoted to Class B, no additional points added)]

N-No...

I clenched my fist.

It couldn't.....it couldn't possibly get worse.....we just need to keep our rank as Class or else Sakayanagi-san will take over-

" Oh, right! Class A, who will you choose to rob off of 300 class points?" Lumine asked with a smile.

I looked towards Ichinose-san, Class A's leader. She's a kind girl, surely, she must have pity....therefore there's no way she'd choose-

Suddenly, her gaze met mine. And for a moment, her eyes darkened, a small smirk appearing on her face. I was stunned to see such a look from a girl like her, but before I could properly process the sight, she averted her head towards Lumine with her normal smile.

" **Class C.**" She said.

" C-CHOTTO!" I yelled as I held my hand out in protest.

" I-ICHINOSE-SAN P-PLEASE PICK ANOTHER CLASS-" I tried to plea but she gave me another look, this time....she wore a sadistic smile similar to that of the director's.

I choked back my words as I froze.

" Class C? How unexpectedly cruel! Very well, then! And the rest of the classes will gain 100 class points!" Lumine smiles sadistically.

Why....Why are the both of them....why.....why why why...

I looked towards the scoreboard....

[Class A - 1160 cp - (+ 300) 1460]

[Class B - 560 cp - (+ 100) 660 cp]

[Class C- 400 cp - (Demoted to Class D, -300) 100 cp]

[Class D - 400 - (Promoted to Class C , + 100) 500]

" We're back to Class D again..." My classmates muttered in horror.

No....No...NoNonononononono

" Yikes! Due to Horikita's dishonesty, her classmates had to suffer for it! How cruel! Truly!" Lumine pokes my cheek mockingly, I tried to grab her hand but she quickly swiped it away and distanced herself with an amused look.

" But that's unfair, no? You just HAD to lie....and I don't think it's fair that your classmates should bear the consequences alone.....hmm...whaetever shall I do..." Lumine hums.

What....Wait...is she....no....

" W-Wait-" I tried to stop her but her face immediately brightened as he began speaking,

" I remember stating in the rules of the game that if the student on the plate decides to lie about the confirmation, then they have to endure a punishment!" She said before smiling at me.

" And I know just the punishment to inflict on her..." She said in a dark tone. The atmosphere turned tense and most of the students wore intimidated expressions.

" How about I tell the truth behind the statement? The reason why Horikita is not a virgin." She grins.

"P-PLEASE DON'T!" I got on my knees and faced her. " P-please." I clasped my hands in prayer, like a beggar asking mercy from god.

" PLEASE DON'T TELL THEM! ANYTHING BUT THAT!" I begged as tears began to prick at the corner of my eyes.

I hated this. I absolutely hated being weak....

But if it's the only way to appeal to her...to keep my secret hidden...then...

Then everything will be alright-

" It's because Horikita Suzune was raped by her brother!"

Ayanokoji PoV

Raped? By her brother?

Sakayanagi PoV

How cruel~ Fufu~

Ryuuen PoV

Kuku, so that's why that damn director made a statement like that.

Kanzaki PoV

It's absurd....absolutely horrid....but...

I looked towards Ichinose who wore a frown on her face. But I knew it was **fake**.

How...How did Ichinose know to vote truth so quickly? Seriously, she's....completely unknown to me. At first, I thought she was easy to read but her actions keep suprising me...

Shivers still run down my spine when she told me a certain thing before this game began.

" Don't worry~ We're going to become Class A and gain a lead where the other classes can only HOPE to catch up~"

Those were her words. I couldn't believe it back then but.....

" Are you okay, Kanzaki-kun?" The creature herself asked me. With a fake...sincere tone.

" Yeah..." I decided to clear my thoughts for now....or else I might face consequences myself.

Horikita PoV

" T-That's not true!" I stood up and went towards Lumine.

" Oh? But it is!" She says and I halted my movements once she began uttering more horrible words...

" He came to your home, drunk and not right in the head, yes? Then you tried to take care of him but then it backfired when he pinned you on the bed? And then he raped you." She said.

" UNTRUE!" I still persisted.

" Hmm, maybe you're right.....perhaps a certain part of my words might have been true." She hummed before her eyes twinkled with excitement and pure sadism.

" It's not rape....because you enjoyed it, didn't you?"

" ... "

" N-Nii-san what are you doing?" I stuttered as he pinned me on the bed.

His eyes, the same color as mine, gazed at me deeply. It made me squirm uncomfortably the longer he stared....

" Nii-san-"

" Suzune...." he called my name in a tone I never heard

before...

But I liked it...

I smiled shyly.

" W-What is it- MPFH!" I was then interrupted when his lips softly collided with mine.

Why is he doing this?!

We're siblings!

But...

Why....

Why didn't I push him away?

" Mmm..." I let out a strange sound as I wrapped my hand around his head.

And tried to deepen it.

Why did I do that?

Why did I want more?

Why is my body warm, why is my heart beating so fast?

We're brother and sister-

" Pwah..." Our lips parted but soon after, he began landing kisses on my neck.

" Suzune..." He mumbled through his kisses while I let out another strange sound. It felt weird but it felt so good.

My body was only getting warmer.

" What I'm about to do..." he says as he inserts his hand under my shirt.

" Don't tell anyone....understand? Your brother is pleading, Suzune...." He says in a drunk tone.

And I responded in kind,

" Y-yes n-nii-san...."

And then he bit my neck, I muffled my screams as much as I could as I felt his teeth piercing deeply. I felt my neck ooze out some blood from the marks but licked them, even commenting how good I tasted.

before eventually, he undressed me and himself....

and the night felt like a blur....

I fell to my knees as tears began staining my cheeks.

" How disgusting..."

" It's true?"

" That girl...willingly had sex with her brother?"

" Ew!"

" She should be ashamed!"

i wanted to tell them to shut up.....but I couldn't speak. i could only try to wipe my tears away.

" Seriously~ Such a disgusting side of yourself, Hoe-rikita!" The director laughs much to her amusement.

Why....Why is she so cruel....

Dammit...

Damn it all....

B-Brother.....I....I failed you again...

Manabu-nii slams the door closed as he glares at me.

" How. How does our school know?" He asked.

I was crying on the floor as he stared down at me. When I told him I had no idea, he looked at me and then to himself in the mirror as he covered his face. He looked absolutely shameful...and so was I.

" Suzune.....I.....I'm so sorry...oh god....I ruined both of our lives..." He crumpled to the floor as tears of regret began staining his usually stoic face.

I crawled to him quickly and touched his shoulder, trying my best to comfort him.

" N-Nii-san...p-please don't blame y-yourself-"

He grabs my wrist roughly and gives me a look of panic.

" Suzune....I....RAPED YOU....." He looks down, " I can't....as a brother....as YOUR brother...I can't forgive myself for that. "

I lifted his face up so he could look at me.

" N-Nii-san.....I didn't hate it...."

" What...?"

I smiled with tears on my face. Why was I smiling in a situation like this? Oh, now I remember.... it's because I realized my true feelings for him...

" I love you....Nii-san.....that's why...I'm happy we did ' it'. " I confessed.

" Suzune...." his tone broke and I stared at his expression.

Huh? Why does he not look happy?

Why...Why does it feel like he's looking at me as if I'm abnormal?

" Suzune....don't say that. DON'T YOU DARE SAY THAT." He yelled.

" H-Huh?"

" We're siblings. What I did messed us up but please for the love of god; Don't tell m you love me in that way. Please." Why was he begging? Does he not reciprocate?

Confused, I continued to insist that my feelings were true.

" But it's true....I...I loved you for a long time, nii-san...." I told him and his face morphed into more shock as he gently pushed me away and stood up.

" Oh god....what have I done to you....no...no no....no...NO NO NO..." He said as he began scuffling through his usually neat hair. But now it was messy.

" SUZUNE I'M SO SORRY! DAMN IT! I FAILED YOU!" He punches the wall.

Why is he acting like this?!

I tried to reach up to him but he gave me a horrid look which made me froze. And his next words shattered me to pieces.

" Suzune...I don't see you in that way.....what happened that night...I wasn't right in the head." he continued, " Please...don't love me in that way....and also..."

He bites his lip.

" Stay away from me...." He ordered.

I wrapped my arms around myself as I felt that familiar shiver. Reliving that memory....it feels even colder than the last time because this time....he's dead. He's gone....

" I'm so...sorry..." I murmured to myself.

I didn't care about the multiple gazes aimed towards me. I could guess that they were shocked, disgusted, horrified, disappointed, and absolutely repulsed by a person like me....

...

" But then rumors came out, right? Someone knew somehow and it circulated through the entire school. The Japanese police even began investigating on it after one of the school staff called them and informed them about it out of worry for you. Right?" She said and I heard her footsteps approaching me.

" Your brother was bullied. Everyone thought he was a rapist and a sibling rapist at that." She chuckles.

Stop...

Don't...talk such horrible things about my brother...

" Everyone he ever knew went against him and abandoned him. He was alone but even so, he continued with his studies. You two were both lucky that the police found no evidence but....the rumors still persisted." She stopped in front of me.

And then she crouched right in front of me, grabbing me by the chin and making me look towards her golden eyes. In that moment, I felt like I was drowning in her abyss....

" But then, out of pure guilt.....his little sister.....YOU.....tried to ' fix' it, right?"

That's right...I tried to fix it...

That day...when I sought out Kushida-.....Kikyo's help...

" Suzune-chan? Are you serious...?" My best friend with beige colored hair had asked.

I nod. " Can you do it?"

"Suzune-chan....I can't." She denied.

" What?" I asked. What does she mean by ' can't' ? She can do it. It's so simple for someone like her who knows a lot of secrets.

The friendly girl that everyone loves is BOUND to believe her.

She looked at me with nervous eyes.

" I-It's cruel!" She reasoned.

" Cruel?" I laughed.

" You think THAT'S cruel? These bastards have been bullying my brother ever since these rumors began spreading! They beat him up, tear his notes, destroy his projects, and this **FUCKING SCHOOL IS NOT DOING ANYTHING TO HELP!** " I yelled. Not even the school was willing to help an alleged rapist.

" Suzune-chan-"

" You don't understand.....I....I can't watch my brother suffer like this. He's always had my back...and I will always have his but I can't do it alone." I grabbed both of her hands and looked into her eyes with a pleading gaze.

" P-Please....K-Kikyo-chan.....won't you do it? For your best friend?" I asked.

I hoped she would say yes. We were friends, the closest of friends.....she was...SUPPOSED to say yes... but-

" I can't..." She sighs, " I'm sorry...."

I dropped my pleading look.

I immediately began to stare at her with contempt.

" You.....fine..." I dropped her hands.

I stared at her with emotionless eyes.

" Then consider our friendship over." I said.

" H-Huh?!" She quickly turns ot me, " W-Wait-"

I sighed.

" It seems like not even you are willing to help me. You're just like them. If that's the case, then I'll hate you forever and pray to the gods that you and everyone else will rot in hell." I spoke with venom.

Her expression turned sad and confused.

Yes, it's working...

The last resort...my only choice left...

" Goodbye, Kushida." I decided to switch to her last name to finish her off.

" Wait! I-I'll do it! I'll do it for you, Suzune chan!"

I smiled. I knew she'd fall prey. Such an easy girl.

Don't worry brother....everything will be okay soon....

But....the result of my actions....

" But alas, despite your efforts," She lets go of my chin and sighs, before standing up.

" He began hating you."

...He did....He did begin hating me after that....

....

I've destroyed all of my **bonds**.

The **bond** with my brother...

The **bond** with Kikyo...my bestest friend...

And the small **bond** I thought I began to have with Class D...

All of it...I destroyed...

All of it.....is broken...

And ever since then,

....

I'd begun hating myself.

CHAPTER END!

Yep, very epic backstory, yeah?

I had a ton of fun writing it.

hehe~

Writing characters suffering for my own amusement and for other to see is quite...nice. Just like I expected it to be.

I hope you enjoyed this episode and look forward to the next one!

Will Suzune ever redeem herself in the eyes of others?

Will it even matter if she feels that she isn't worthy of such a chance?

Or will she just...die?

Well, you'll find out soon. In future eps probably.

KawaiiLumine- ah, who am I kidding.

SADISTICLumine out~!

Episode 11: Suzune and Kikyo

Third Person PoV

Horikita knelt on the ground, weeping on the floor and covering her eyes. Everyone stayed silent, some still in shock and disbelief, few in amusement, and others with disgust.

Horikita Suzune's reputation....had been utterly destroyed.

Ah, but Horikita Suzune doesn't give a damn about her own reputation. Rather, she's blaming herself because now, even in death, her brother will be mocked in the eyes of others.

They'll see him as a monster.

They'll see her as a freak.

Their family name.....his name....' Manabu' will be stained forever. It seems even in this school that avoids all contact with those from the outside, new people now inherit the knowledge of her truth. The very reason she hates herself.

Lumine chuckles. The blonde woman held no pity for Horikita

Suzune or anyone for the matter, she was, is, and always will be a cruel woman who only lives to see others suffer, to see others grow, and then tumble back down back into the fiery pit of failure.

But with Horikita's turn finished, then this concludes the first round of game 2.

" Well, that was quite an amazing first round, right?" Lumine smiles towards the other classes.

" I'm glad we could end it with a twist! Leaves room for more excitement on round 2, yes?" She tilts her head cutely.

" And besides, by playing this game, you get to discover your classmates' true selves, their deep and darkest secrets, and hidden personas! And then you can use that awesome knowledge to solidify that friendship!" She spoke cheerfully before glancing at Horikita and then chuckling.

" Well, so long as you don't act like Horikita over here. Then you're fine! " She mocks.

Lumine looks towards the clock.

9:30 am

She then faces the students again.

" Well then! Nice round, everyone!" She claps her hands, " But let's take a 30 minute break, yeah? Assemble here at the gym by 10 am, and if you don't then you get to have YOUR secret exposed!" She smiles.

Everyone sighs. They had no choice anyways.

" And with that, see ya later!" She waves goodbye before leaving the stage and exiting through another door.

The classes soon took their leave....

Except for 3 people.

Kushida PoV

" Eh? You'll stay here for a bit, Kushida-san?" Hasebe-san asked me.

I nodded. " Yep! I'll catch up in a bit, no worries!" I assured her.

" Okay then...." Maezono said, sounding a bit disappointed. I felt bad but I have to stay, I have something important to do right now.

The rest of the girls nodded and soon left the gymnasium along with the rest of our classmates. I released a sigh, feeling a weight being placed on my shoulders as I mentally prepared myself for this confrontation. This confrontation had been haunting me for a year

after graduation so this really important to me, for me to move on, for me to stop hoping.

I turned around and looked towards the stage where I saw Suzune-chan in the same position, silently weeping. My heart pained at the sight, seeing my best-...well.....Ex-best friend reduced to such a state.

Even if we aren't friends anymore...

Even if I knew she just used me...

I want to clarify things once more with her. The joyful memories I shared with her, all the times we talked, those are things I could never forget nor replace. I want to know if she feels the same and if she doesn't or if she says 'yes' but is clearly lying then...

I will leave her be.

That'll be the end of my friendship with her.

But for now....right now.....I have to take the first step. Just like all those years ago.

" Hi there!" I waved towards a little girl my age. She had

short black hair and beautiful red eyes!

She turns to me with a blank look? I think?

She then silently turns away and walks towards a boy that seems older and looks like her but a boy version! Oh, and he has glasses too!

" Suzune, are you not going to say hello?" I managed to hear the boy ask as he glances at me.

" Can we go already, Nii-san...?" I hear ' Suzune' softly say.....wait...Nii-san? Oh! They're siblings!

The big brother sighs and shakes his head.

" No. Not until you return her greeting." He says, sternly.

I hear ' Suzune' groan before she looks at me.

"Hi." She says with zero enthusiasm. I smiled brightly and waved again but she already turned around and dragged her big brother along.

She seems very interesting!

I went up the stage and took slow steps.....

My hands trembled and I think felt a bit of sweat forming on my face. My nerves are killing me! But I can't let that stop me.

You have to be persistent and stay persistent, Kikyo!

" Hi there! It's me again!" I waved at her.

She looks at me.

"Mm." She simply hummed and went back to reading her book. Eh?

" What'cha reading?" I tried to take a peek but she immediately closed the book before I could see.

She sighs before turning at me with an annoyed look.

" Could you leave me alone?" She asked.

" But why?" I asked her and tilted my head curiously, " Wouldn't you be sad?"

" No, I wouldn.'t."

I finally arrived.

I kneeled down on my knees, facing her, but she was still covering her face and hiding her tears away. I took a deep breath and tried to compose myself properly before speaking,

"Suzune-chan?" I said to her. I haven't called her that in her face for a year.....but what felt like a year almost felt like forever.

"..." She stays silent. I'm not sure if she voluntarily chose to do, or she was too distracted by her thoughts to notice my presence or register my calls. Either way, I intend to continue grabbing her attention like I always have.

I slowly reached for her hands which were covering her face and gently tried to pry them off. I succeeded and my gaze was met on a broken face, tear-stained, tired, and a feeling of hatred for oneself on full display for me to see. For me to understand.

" Suzune-chan." I called her name again.

Her soulless gaze finally met mine.

"...Kushida...." She acknowledges in a glum manner. But then she looks down at our hands and she quickly forcefully retract hers, opting to place them on her lap while mine were left hanging alone.

" Suzune-chan....it's been a while, hasn't it?" I smiled awkwardly.

"....So it has..." She replied.

Indeed. Even if I had tried to talk to her earlier in the year, she always rejected my presence and my words and it was even harder for me to find the perfect time for us to be alone. Granted, I'd much

prefer if the situation wasn't now, but maybe this was better chance in terms of heart-to-heart. Maybe she can be honest with me after.....feeling so sad.

"....I'm sorry...." She suddenly said.

" Huh?" I wasn't sure if I heard that correctly.

" I'm so sorry.....for using you....for leaving you behind.....Kushida-san...." She looks down.

" I'm a terrible friend....I can't....I can't believe my dumb self would do such a cruel thing to you....." She says

" Suzune-chan, it's okay, I forgive you-"

" You shouldn't!" She yells. " You're too kind for your own good, Kushida-san! Way too damn kind! And....And I took advantage of that."

"....My brother....he'd be disappointed at the person I've become...." She says, sounding even more dejected.

"....I made....so many mistakes....even today....I ruined everything. I was driven by anger and revenge for my brother's death....and.." She glances at me for a moment, " Seeing you just made it even more painful. You've become a painful reminder to me."

"..." A painful reminder....

That's...exactly how I saw you, Suzune-chan.

I never expected for us to reunite in the same school yet here you are, here I am. Here we are.

There were doubts, I will admit. Doubts that our friendship could never be mended but I had to try anyways. I had to be sure. I didn't want to have any regrets.....and now my chance is here.

I tried to touch her hand but she quickly retracted it even further as if she was scared of me.

" Don't touch me...."

" Why?"

" I'm disgusting..."

" No you're not."

" Yes...I am..."

" Why?"

"....I destroyed all my bonds....."

" I'm still here..."

She looks at me with doubt in her gaze.

" But you'll leave me soon...and I wouldn't blame you. Not one bit. "

" Why do you think that?" I asked her, softly.

" ...It's because I'm a disgusting person..." She said once more before chuckling to herself in sorrow.

" I remember...something.....something you said before. Back when we first met..." Her lips curled up just a tiny bit. " I asked if you could leave me alone....." she then looks deeply into my eyes. " Do you remember what you replied?"

" ' Wouldn't you be sad?' " I recited.

She nods. " Yes...that. And do you remember how I replied?"

" ' No, I wouldn't.' " I said, mimicking her tone. Fortunately, a genuine chuckle escaped her lips as I said that.

" Yeah...that's right." She confirms.

....

.....

.....

A short silence loomed over us. Is that it? Is that all she was going

to say? Oh, who am I kidding. This is Horikita Suzune I'm talking about. Even back then, she was always a straightforward type of girl and I always liked that about her. She must've thought that our personal matters between each other were already solved with her admitting remorse and apologizing.

Unfortunately, I'm going to have to shatter that, Suzune-chan.

I stayed here so I can talk with you and confirm an important thing that determined both of our paths. So I can't have you be silent now.

" Are you sad about feeling alone, Suzune-chan?"

" ... "

" Are you sad?"

"....I don't deserve to be-"

" That's not my question." I grabbed her by the shoulders, causing her to look at me in surprise.

" Are you sad? Feeling lonely?" I asked her again, sternly.

"....What right do I have to be sad...?" She stayed stubborn. Another trait of hers I both love and hate.

" Every right. You've been through so much pain and back then, I had the gall to refuse at first. You didn't betray our friendship, it was me. I was the first one who did." I shifted the blame to myself because I believed it to be true. She may have used me, but I should've helped her.

I should've at least tried to convince her to think about the situation better but I didn't. I allowed myself to fall prey. And I allowed her to walk alone.

" What are you saying-"

" In other words," I interrupted her. " I'm sorry....I'm so sorry!" I yelled out my apology.

" If I tried to help you search for a better way then you wouldn't have ended up like this. I'm so sorry....." I felt tears threatening to fall out of my eyes. She stared at me with a shocked expression.

Choking back my sadness. I continued on with my feelings.

" I'm...also a terrible friend....so...you're not the only one at fault, okay?" I tearfully smiled.

" Kushida-"

" Kikyo." I interrupted her with a pleading tone, " Please.....please call me Kikyo..."

Ironically enough, this also reminded me of the past.

" Are you all right?" Horikita asks me as she stared at me with a listless expression.

I had scraped my knee after playing in the playground. I had accidentally tripped on a root branch. I frowned at the sight of blood slowly seeping from my wound.

Mama always told me to not panic and remain calm. So that I will do.

S-Still....i-it d-doesn't stop me from wanting to cry about it!

" ...Are you seriously crying?" She asked, sounding disappointed.

" n-no!" I denied horribly even though the tears were already falling down my cheeks like a waterfall.

She sighs before kneeling in front of me and taking a few things out from her small satchel bag.

While I was trying to hold back any more tears from flowing down my face, she looks at me with a deadpan expression.

" Stop crying already. " She said.

" O-Okay..." I didn't want to embarrass myself in front of her, so I REALLY tried to do as she asked.

" Stay still." She says before dousing my wound with a bit of water from her water bottle. After that, she begins to grab a bottle of medicine (I think) and began unscrewing it.

" What's that?" I asked, nervously. Was she going to make me drink it? I'll spit it out! I hate medicine!

" Saline solution to treat your wound." She replied softly before proceeding to douse a clean cotton with the solution.

" Eh? Why does Suzune-san have that?" I asked.

" My brother is protective, so in a situation where I get a minor wound and he's not around. If I'm unable to call help, then I will be able to treat myself temporarily." She said.

" Ohh....Suzune-san's brother is really caring, huh..." I said, amazed.

And then I saw it.

A soft smile appeared on her face.

" Yes....he is..." She says in a fond tone.

Woah.....she looks so pretty when she smiles!

" Suzune-san, you're pretty when you smile!" I blurted out.

Her smile instantly disappears as she began scooting closer to my knee to take a good luck.

Her smile disappeared so fast...

" This might hurt a bit. But stay still."

" Okay."

....

.....

.....

"OWWWW! I-IT HURTS!" I cried.

" I told you it would. So why are you suprised?" She asked, annoyed.

" B-But I-I didn't e-expect it to hurt this much!" I reasoned.

" What do you mean? Doesn't your mom treat your wounds like this? Or your dad?" She asked.

....

" I...um...." I felt sad again at the mention of mom and dad...

"...Nevermind." Suzune suddenly said. I looked at her to see her wearing an apologetic look but she didn't say anything close to an apology.

She must've guessed...

I smiled.

" Thank you for healing me, Suzune-san!" I said in gratitude.

" I didn't heal you. I just cleaned your wound so there'd be no infections." She said before placing a bandage to top it off. And then she looks at me with a frown.

" And stop calling me Suzune." She said.

" Call me Kikyo!" I randomly said.

" What?"

" We're going to be best friends, Suzune-chan!"

" huh? What are you talking about?!"

" You can call me Kikyo-chan!"

" I don't want your friendship- H-HEY! STOP HUGGING ME!"

It took a while but she eventually opened up to me and we were close from then on.

Well...until this...situation and the one prior had occurred...

"....Kikyo...." She said.

" Yes?" I ask. I was happy to hear her utter my name once more. No, that would be an understatement. Rather....to put it in a better word....I feel absolutely ecstatic.

"....You're...so dumb."

" Eh?"

Suzune gives me a tearful smile.

" Seriously....taking the blame..? That's so like you...." She chuckles.

I guess so...

" Kikyo..." She says.

" Yes?" I asked.

"....Thank you.....Thank you....for being here." She looks down to the ground with a somber look mixed with gratefulness.

" I thought all my bonds...were destroyed. My bond with you as well but.....you kept it together. Thank you...." She said.

I released a happy sigh before wrapping my arms around her, pulling her close to me in a warm hug.

" Kikyo-"

" Let me have this, Suzune-chan."

" Ugh....fine..." She says as she slowly reciprocates my hug.

" Are you two done?" A familiar voice interrupts this blissful silence.

" Huh?" Both Suzune-chan and I look towards a familiar figure making his way towards us.

" Ayanokoji-kun..." I uttered in shock.

Was he here the whole time?!

" ..." Suzune didn't say anything.

" So you weren't lying, Kushida." He got up the stage, " It seems like Horikita was the liar all along." He says as he looked towards Suzune.

" Yes....it was me. I'm sorry for deceiving you into thinking Kushida was a bad person, Ayanokoji-kun..." Suzune apologizes sincerely.

" ' Deceiving me' ? You're giving yourself too much credit there, Horikita." He stops right in front of us and glares at Suzune.

" How can a useless woman like you ' deceive' me in anything?"

" Ayanokoji-kun?!" I was suprised to see him glaring at Suzune with the same eyes he had back when he fought with Sudo-kun.

And he's using...such a scary tone...like before....

" And seriously, ' sorry' ? You think sorry will cut it?" He said.

" What else do you want from me, Ayanokoji-kun..." Suzune weakly asks.

Suddenly, in such a swift movement, he quickly grabbed Suzune-chan by her hair. He yanked her towards him using her hair as the pull.

" AYANOKOJI-KUN! LET HER GO!" I immediately stood up but then he gives me a scary look which made me froze in place.

" A-AH! S-STOP!" Suzune-chan tries to pull away Ayanokoji-kun's wrist but he was too strong for her. He continued gripping her hair tightly.

" Why did you do it?" He asked.

" W-What do you mea- AH!" He yanks her hair again, making her scream.

" Don't play dumb. Do you realize what you've done? I couldn't care less about you lying to me, but because of your **stupid** actions you dropped us back to Class D. " He says in an angry tone.

" I-I'm sorry-!"

" I don't give a damn about your apologies, Horikita. " He pulls her close and grabs her by the chin roughly, making her look at him.

" I want you to realize how stupid your actions were regardless of your reason. If you had just admitted the truth, then the direction wouldn't have revealed your dark secret. But no, you kept denying

it not thinking about the consequences."

" P-Please stop, Ayanokoji-ku-" I tried to say but he interrupts.

" Shut your mouth, Kushida. I'm not talking to you." He said before suddenly shoving Suzune to the floor. " I'm only talking to her."

" Agh..." Suzune slowly sat up, recovering from the ground.

Why...Why is Ayanokoji-kun doing this?!

I..I thought he didn't care about the class...so why....

" Do you realize it now? How much damage you've caused? " He said to her.

"...I...I do....and...I won't do it again!" She looks up at him with fearful eyes, " I swear..."

" Words alone are not enough to redeem your actions." He said.

" Prostrate yourself before the entire class and beg like the loser you are for their forgiveness."

" That's enough Ayanokoji-kun!" I yelled as I stomped towards him, winding my hand back.

I intended to slap him but he caught me by the wrist and yanked me to the side and then letting go which then sent me to the floor.

" Kikyo!" Suzune called out my name.

Horikita PoV

" Ayanokoji-kun, don't hurt her!" I yelled, feeling my anger rising once more.

His eyes then glance towards Kushida and then back to me.

Suddenly, his lips formed into a smirk and his eyes began changing....

W-What the hell....

That gaze....it's...the same...as them?!

First Ichinose-san...

Now Ayanokoji-kun....

Before I could process my thoughts, I hear Kikyo screaming and I snapped out my trance to see Ayanokoji-kun pulling her up rather roughly.

" HEY!" I yelled.

" Perhaps if I hurt the last person you care about. You'll understand not to make the same mistake again." He says in....a sadistic tone...

Why....What's wrong with him?!

" Let go of her you **Monster!**" I stood up, ready to fight if needed be.

" **SHOW ME YOUR RESOLVE HORIKITA.**"

I clenched my fists. That's it. He's going out of line...

I prepared myself to fight him, uncaring if I lose, I just need to distract him so Kikyo can run and gather help or at very least, keep herself safe.

I can't lose another person I care about...

I rushed towards him and he shoved Kikyo to the side as he puts his hands up, ready to defend. I aimed a right roundhouse kick. He blocks it and then holds it with both of his hands before using his closest foot to trip my only standing leg.

But I reacted quickly and jumped with one leg before he could trip me. I then wrapped that same leg around his neck and took him down with me to the ground where I then began to search for a good submission hold while he was taken off-guard.

Come on!

I kicked him repeatedly, forcing him to block while I continued to search for the perfect hold.

There!

I moved quickly once I saw his neck was left unguarded. I climbed over to the side of his body and quickly slid my arm underneath both his neck and right arm and then used my free arm to snake its way to the outer surface from the back of his neck and

applied my choke. I leaned my head to the side of his body where he has no chance of hitting me and then proceeded to twist his body a bit to tighten the hold.

" Nghh..." Ayanokoji-kun lets out a sound of struggle.

" Run, Kikyo!" I screamed with urgency as I tried to keep Ayanokoji-kun trapped in my hold.

If he continues to struggle, then I have no choice but to go through with the choke. I did my best to put all my weight to his side in order to prevent him from twisting to his favor.

" B-But Suzune-chan-"

" I'LL HANDLE HIM! JUST GO AND CALL FOR HELP!" I ordered her.

" You sure about that, Horikita.."

Ayanokoji-kun speaks, almost as if he's mocking me. I tighten my hold but he was still strongly struggling against me.

" It was a nice trick...really..." he says.

" Seems like you know Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.....that's-" he tries to twist but I kept my hold on him. " -interesting..."

" Surrender, Ayanokoji-kun!" I urged him. In all honesty, I didn't want to resort to choking him out. But if I have to then I will.

" ...You've shown me your **resolve**..."

What is he talking about. Why does he care about my resolve?

" You're insane, Ayanokoji-kun. You're just like the director, aren't you!" I told him.

"...That so?" he said, complete disbelief in my words.

" Yes"

" Then I should stop." He said.

" Huh?" I was confused by his words until he suddenly pushes himself by forcefully lifting his body and propping up his free elbow forcing it to become his support on the ground.

What is this core strength?!

He then pushes himself off from the ground using his propped

elbow as momentum. I still kept my choke hold on him even when he flipped us over and he was on top of me this time.

I tried to switch to a triangle choke but he quickly anticipated that and grabbed arm with his now free hand. He gripped it tightly as he forcefully pries it off his neck while simultaneously pulling his legs inside to create some space to stand up.

I-I'm losing my grip!

He finally freed himself from my hold and then-

" AGH!" He punched me in the gut and it sent a shock throughout my body as the pain quickly spiked up. I clutched my stomach and my legs which were trying to desperately keep its hold on his lower body, weakened due to the attack.

He backed away, quickly stood up and stared me down.

" Aghh..." I moaned in pain. Ugh, it hurts.

" Suzune-chan!" Kushida cries as she slides to my side and tries to check if I'm oka- wait.

" Kikyo...ngh....I told you to run away-"

" She'll be all right, Kushida. I didn't punch her too hard."

Ayanokoji-kun interrupted.

" I know....but I was still worried!" Kikyo says with a concerned expression.

Huh...? She knows...? What?

" Kikyo...what's going on..." I managed to ask.

" I'm sorry, Horikita-san....but Ayanokoji-kun wanted to affirm something with you...and he promised to be as gently as he possibly could with you if I complied." She frowns. " I'm sorry-"

I didn't want to hear her apology. There was no need. So instead, i quickly reassured her,

" It's okay...but..." I glance towards Ayanokoji-kun. His expression turned back to normal, blank and boring. " But when...?"

" The moment the game was announced, I sent a text to Kushida saying that if ever the situation comes where you'd break down just like before. I will take that opportunity to affirm things with you, albeit, in a manner like this." He explained.

"Why?" I asked him.

" I wanted to confirm both you and Kushida's history. And also your resolve." He answered.

"...My resolve?"

He nods.

" Your resolve to winning. Your resolve to punishing yourself. Your resolve to grow from this. And you've shown me that. Even when you knew the risks of fighting me and a bit of what I'm capable of, you still stepped in and attempted to fight me off in order to save Kushida." He looks between me and Kikyo before sighing.

" You two are good friends. " He said.

Kikyo laughs at that while I slowly processed what I just heard. I can;t believe he'd go this far.....just to confirm my resolve? Ayanokoji Kiyotaka is really someone I could never understand.

But...I understand.

I understand why he did this.

" I get it..." I muttered.

" Hm?" Ayanokoji tilts his head, curious to hear me further elaborate.

I looked into his golden brown eyes with determination.

" I know what to do now." I told him.

We stared in silence....

Until he nods.

" Good." Was all he said.

" What did you get from it, Suzue-chan?" Kikyo asked.

I closed my eyes as I began to recall a statement from Ayanokoji back at the first game...

' Put aside differences, work together,even if the situation is hopeless...'

In order for me to do that....

I need to mend my bonds...as best I can. To be precise, I'm referring to my bond with the class, no matter how little and thin it may be.

" Don't worry about it, Kikyo." I stood up and kept my hand clutched to my stomach since the blow still hurt.

" Let's....go meet with the rest of Class D." I said to Kikyo.

" Okay!" She immediately agreed before looking towards Ayanokoji-kun.

" I'll be there in a bit." He says in a dismissive tone.

We both nodded and went our way, leaving him behind. I'm curious as to why he wants to stay but I shouldn't waste time for I have something important to accomplish before round 2 begins.

Ayanokoji PoV

I sighed once the both of them left.

Round 1 of game 2 was certainly useful. I've gotten to know a few truths here and there, and I finally dealt with both Kushida and Horikita's fractured past. Neither of them will cause worry for me in the future now that their situation is resolved and gained closure.

...

This game....

Initially, I'd thought that neither classes will gain true victory in this game. But Ichinose proved me wrong, could it be instinct? How does she know the correct answer and reply accordingly? Her class managed to gain 1460 class points and managed to demote Class A to Class D in a few turns while also demoting us from Class B back to Class D.

While Horikita indeed is mostly responsible for the latter, it doesn't erase the uncomfortable feeling I had when Ichinose, without hesitation, selected Class D to steal class points from. And that look returned on her face for a split moment....

Ichinose is a mystery.

I can't see her true intentions through her fake cheerful persona (if it is even fake in the first place), how can someone sound so sincere with her words and yet act so ruthless without hesitation?

She's indeed the biggest obstacle for all the classes in this game. And perhaps she'll remain that way in future games. In fact, it's fair enough for me to think that **Ichinose will win game 2 with a huge lead in class points...**

But we'll see if she can prove my initial thoughts about this game wrong. I'm interested to see if she could mix in more doses of despair in this already hopeless situation that's currently running in her favor.

Well, the situation is not truly hopeless.

There is one strategy that could likely counter Ichinose...however...it requires further information on how Ichinose will continue to act throughout this game. And it also requires the perfect time in order to apply it, or else she'll fully counter it and leave us renderless.

Until then, all I can do is watch and see how this game progresses.....

Kanzaki PoV

" You wished to discuss something with me privately?" I arrived to a room alone with Ichinose.

She smiles and nods.

" Yep!" She says, enthusiastically.

I felt an uncomfortable feeling rise up my throat. I've always felt this feeling ever since I caught a glimpse of her hidden nature....

" What is it?" I asked.

Suddenly, her smile morphs into that mischievous grin and her eyes sharpened. She walks towards me and with each step she took, I wanted to run, but I knew I couldn't or else I'll face her anger.

This woman....

" I have a plan for the next round~" She says before giggling and then leaning towards my ear to whisper her plan.....

My eyes widened and I stepped back in shock.

" A-Are you serious?" I asked, stuttering.

She nods confidently, her grin widening.

" But....it's...what if-"

" What? Are you scared?" She asked.

"...." I was. What she's asking me to do...her plan....it's just.....**cruel**....

" Don't back out now, Kanzaki-kun!" She clasps her hands. " Don't tell me you're a weakling like that Ike guy from Class D!"

Ike....He died, didn't he?

Because Ichinose murdered him.....

Her eyes darkened. It pierced through my soul as she grabs me by the collar.

" You better do as I say, Kanzaki-kun.....if not, then..." Her smile turned evil as her eyes widened resembling the look of a psycho. Every thing within in my being trembled as I stared into her eyes....

And then she spoke....with a sadistic tone. A promising tone. An evil tone.

" You'll be the next one I kill."

*This woman....is not **normal**...*

CHAPTER END!

Phew! that's done.

Horikita and Kushida's bond has mended...

And Horikita has shown her resolve...

Though, I won't guarantee that her bond with the entire class will be fixed within a day, so she might just endure more suffering!

Oh wait,

All the classes will suffer in the next episode!

Oh wait, I shouldn't have said that-

Uh-

I hope you enjoyed the episode!

SadisticLumine, out~

Episode 12: Hope?

Ayanokoji PoV

I resumed my way towards the cafeteria. I only had 15 minutes left before round 2 starts and I'd like to see if I could order any cheap snacks to amuse myself when I spectate the second round. I opened the doors to the empty cafeteria and looked around, seeing if there are any employees but there seems to be none.

I guess they only take orders at lunch...

That's on the assumption if Lumine will even allow the students to eat lunch. Then again, it doesn't really matter since I skipped the game. Therefore, I can leave the gymnasium and eat whenever I want without consequence.

As I was about to leave, I then noticed a snack tray situation on the cafeteria desk. Presented to me was a plate of fried shrimp, sushi, sashimi, onigiri, and dango. I looked around the area once more, surveying for any enemy presence until I was satisfied once more to see that the room was definitely empty.

I'm sure no one will mind if I take an onigiri or two...

I tried to convince myself that as I quickly made my way to the

table where the snack tray was. I gazed at the mentioned choices and felt like devouring all of it within this very moment but I needed to control myself. Just take one onigiri.

Just one...

I took one onigiri. Yes, just one. I began munching on that ONE onigiri. That's right, just one.

Just...one...

One....

One more-

Right as I was about to snatch one more onigiri , I was suddenly startled by a voice which came behind me.

" Ayanokoji-kun?" A girl called.

I quickly retracted my hand and slowly turned around to see my caller. I was surprised to see it was the strawberry blonde herself, the leader of the new Class A, Ichinose Honami, speaking to me. She smiled and peeks at the snack tray to see one onigiri missing from the plate.

" I didn't take any." I instantly said.

She laughs, " Really?"

"...."

" Okay, I did." I sighed, admitting to my criminal ways...

" You don't need to make such a big deal out of it, ya know?" She says, amused before walking to my side where she also gazed at the snack selection.

" I'm sure that there are no cameras nor employees here," She grabs the last two remaining onigiri and handed me the other one with a grin. " And if nobody or nothing's here to catch us....then why should we be scared?"

I took the onigiri she handed me. " You've got a point. However, who knew you could be so foxy, Ichinose." I comment.

She smiles and points towards one of the unoccupied cafeteria tables.

" How about we eat and talk there? I actually have something I'd wish to discuss with you, Ayanokoji-kun." she said.

Something to discuss with me?

An uncomfortable feeling suddenly surfaces within me as I heard those words and thought of the implications behind it. I kept a close eye on her cheerful expression and couldn't seem to find any cracks in her mask, I have nothing to expose her with. Everything about her is well-crafted to the nth degree and that makes me unsure of whether or not to engage in conversation with her.

But I'm willing to risk it.

' Keep your allies close, and your enemies closer.' They say...

" Sure."

I agreed and she nods, satisfied of my answer as we made our way towards one of the tables and sat in the vacant seats opposite of each other. We both began eating our onigiri in silence, although I felt that silence will not be maintained within the next 5 minutes since Ichinose came here with the purpose of a discussion between us alone.

" Hey, Ayanokoji-kun." She suddenly calls.

I finished my last bite before looking at her in question.

" Yes?"

" Why don't you transfer to my class?"

Huh?

" Is that a joke?" I asked.

" No no, " She waves her hands in denial, " I'm being serious!"

Still, to ask that so suddenly....

" I just thought...." She trails off.

" Thought what?" I ask, curious.

" Isn't it annoying for you? To be placed in a class full of idiots and failures?" She asked.

.....

" I mean, anyone would be frustrated but YOU must feel frustrated the most, right? Winning 500 class points for them and then all because of one mistake from an incompetent girl like Horikita-san and you all crumbled back from Class B to Class D. " She propped up an arm on the table, resting her right cheek on her right hand.

" So doesn't it feel annoying?" She asked, her smile gone and wearing the look of pity.

" I suppose so." I replied, honestly.

There was no reason for me to lie about an obvious aspect of our class. It's definitely annoying to see them fail over and over and fail to conduct logical plans and execute them officially without one of them starting a quarrel with one another. But could I blame them? I feel as if the director designed these games with the purpose of breaking us apart, whether it be through mental warfare or death. Either way, my class has lost too much and it's not a guarantee that they can handle one more loss before tasting victory.

" Great!" She smiles brightly.

" Then why don't you transfer to my class?" She asked. Her tone seeping confidence and her eyes glimmering in victory, as if ' yes' was my only choice.

However logical that may be....

" Unfortunately, I must humbly decline your offer, Ichinose." I said.

" Eh? May I know why?" She asks.

" It wouldn't be fun for you, right?"

" Huh?"

" You didn't really expect me to say yes, Ichinose." I stated as I looked deeply into her gaze which feigned innocence and confusion.

" Drop the mask." I told her.

She giggles in response for dropping her smile to a small grin.

" You saw through me, huh?" She mused.

" You LET me see through you." I corrected her.

" Why do you say that?"

I sighed. " I couldn't see through your mask, not yet at least. But this time, you gave away your intentions too easily and I quickly assumed that it was intentional. You wanted me to understand that YOU wouldn't exactly prefer for me to be in your class. Is that correct?" I asked.

She snaps her fingers, " Bingo! You're incredibly smart, Ayanokoji-kun!" She compliments. Though, I'm not sure if it was truthful or fake, but I'm leaning more towards the latter.

" That's right, in all honesty...you'll be more fun as an enemy than an ally." Her eyes shined with mischievous intent.

I decided to play her game.

" What if you'll regret having me as an enemy, Ichinose?"

" Then it'll be war..." She leans forward.

And with an evil smile, she said,

" And war goes both ways~♡ "

I, too, began leaning forward to match her distance.

" But only one will stand as the victor. You are aware, yes?" I said to her, fully implying to her that in the end I will win. She understood that when her smile grew bigger in excitement.

" Perhaps so, after all, this game is just battle. A battle I'm going to win." She says, confidently.

" It's still so early in the game, you are aware of that, right? At

any given moment, Sakayanagi or Ryuen could mess you up. The pressure you're feeling deep down inside, tell me, is it unbearable?" I asked and observed her expression.

" ' Pressure'? What pressure? " She chuckles. " I don't feel any pressure, rather, I feel excited for what's about to come! " She cheerfully said. She didn't seem worried about Ryuen or Sakayanagi but judging from her tone and how quick she dismissed that topic, it's almost as if she's looking down on both of them.

I suppose it's time for me to pop the question while we still have time. The chances of her answering truthfully should be high if my predictions are right, that she's connected to her, that she's been raised and inherited that same mindset, the same desire.

" Ichinose."

" Hm?"

" Are you connected to Director Lumine by any chance?"

" Why, yes!"

She answered that without hesitation. I thought I could at least surprise her but that was foolish of me to think so despite the fact that 88% of me already knew she'd spill without hesitation if my theory were to be confirmed true. And it did.

" How?" I asked, relaxing my shoulders a bit since I've been keeping them tense throughout this conversation.

" Why would I tell you that?" She giggles.

" Because then it would lead me to assume that Lumine is backing you up with the answers beforehand. Because you seem quick and confident with your previous answers during the first round, not a shred of doubt towards statements that my class were fumbling about. " I state my suspicions.

" Nope! It's just instinct, Ayanokoji-kun. I'm sure that's something you can relate to as well, no?" She says, smoothly. This girl really knows how to stay well-composed with these sudden questions.

If anyone else were in her position, I could spot a few errors in their tone and their facial twitches but not Ichinose. She's well prepared to enter a mental battle, or could it be that she doesn't care about the consequences at all? By acting carelessly, you can use it to be seen as unpredictable in the eyes of others.

" Hey, wanna hear my plan for victory?" She suddenly asked.

" What?" I was caught off-guard but she simply giggled before standing up from her seat.

She then went to my side of the table and proceeded to lean closer to my ear.

She began to whisper....

"...Are you serious?" I asked and looked at her. i couldn't believe

what she had just told me.

She nods, " It's going to be amazing!"

This girl....

" Why would you tell me your plan?" I asked her seriously.

She shrugs, " I felt like it!"

"" I had nothing to more to say regarding her plan...

Except for one thing.....her plan....

Will leave all the other classes **hopeless.....**

" Well then, it's almost time for me to return to my class. It was nice talking to you, Ayanokoji-kun!" She bids her goodbyes before leaving the cafeteria room.

All it'll take is one mistake. One mistake from any of the classes and it will go to her advantage. One mistake and the game is over.

One mistake and she wins entirely.

Ichinose Honami is betting all her chances of winning on that certain mistake.

(Gymnasium)

Round 2 has begun....

20 minutes in and the gap between Class A and the Classes B, C, and D are only getting wider and wider with D barely hanging on with catching up to Class C . I silently gazed at the scoreboard.

[Class A - 2,060] (Ichinose)

[Class B - 800] (Sakayanagi)

[Class C - 760] (Ryuen)

[Class D - 400] (Hirata)

Not even close. Ichinose's class managed to answer the first two statements quickly and managed to get it correct, thus, giving her the chance to steal 600 points which were halved by picking Sakayanagi's class first and then Ryuen's. I'm sure she would've gone for Class D next if Ryuen hadn't submitted his answer first, which led to him subtracting 300 points from Ichinose's class which was originally the amount of 2,360 class points but now 2,060 class

points. It didn't even scrape a single bit of Ichinose's advantage because to her, right now, losing 300 points means nothing if you're a thousand class points and beyond them.

The only notable change from the classes below Class A was that Sakayanagi managed to overtake Ryuen but I bet nobody about something as trivial as that right now. Everyone in this room is focused on making sure to guess faster than Ichinose's class and get the correct answer...

...

It wasn't hopeless just yet.

There is one strategy that all the classes can agree on but it needs to be applied at the perfect time or else it will be a **mistake**.

" And now, I call upon **Hirata Yousuke** to the stage!" Lumine announces the last person for round 2.

" It's time, everyone." Hirata said.

What? That's interesting. Hirata said such a thing with a confident tone rather than reassuring, could it be that they created a plan? I listened closely to the conversations going on within my class.

" Hirata-kun...are you sure really confident we can do this?" Karuizawa asked, seemingly uncomfortable.

Hirata smiles and pats her head.

" There is zero doubt that the director will bring up something personal. That's why.....the moment you hear it. Put **truth**." He said.

" Seriously? Aren't you scared for what's about to come?" Sudo asked.

" No. We still have a chance to win this-" Hirata tried to say but Keisei sighs, interrupting him.

" Do we now? Ichinose's class has a huge lead and not only that, we're the ones at the very bottom....again. How can you say that with such confidence when there's plenty of uncertainties-"

" Indeed, there are uncertainties. But...." Hirata looks towards Keisei with a kind gaze, " Haven't we went over the **plan** during the break already?"

"..."

" The plan will erase the uncertainties within our class. And that's enough, don't you think?" Hirata asked.

"Believe in Hirata-kun." Horikita suddenly said.

" Huh?" Everyone looked to her in suprise.

Horikita looks downwards,

" It was my mistake that led us to the bottom. But with this plan.....I believe in Hirata-kun's words. This is our only chance...our only shot at winning. So..." She trails off, she seemed almost bashful but at the same time not really. Well, in all honesty, Horikita doesn't seem to be the type to comfort or reassure others so she's lacking in that social department like myself.

" What Suzune-chan is trying to say is, " Kushida quickly backs up her friend. " The answer's already been given to us at the start of the game. We were too blind to see it at first but through Suzune-chan's mistake, the answer became clear. So have faith in this plan, everyone!" She cheered.

The atmosphere within Class D lightened up after Kushida's words. They looked to each other and nodded. How interesting, this was the same atmosphere back at the first game when for the very first time, Class D was working as a team.

Let's see what they came up with.....

Hirata walks to the stage. Lumine glances towards Class D with interest before averting her attention towards Hirata. She suddenly smiled as if she's predicting something good will happen and I honestly can't blame her since I, too, feel that something interesting

is about to occur once more.

" Truth or Lie: Hirata Yousuke is responsible for the death of his girlfriend!"

Huh-

" OH! CLASS D ALREADY SUBMITTED THEIR VOTE? AWESOME!" Lumine's voice said seconds after the statement.

I widened my eyes in surprise and I turned to my classmates. They sighed in relief, they didn't look all too surprised...but wait..didn't Hirata tell them to submit truth? If that's the case then why aren't they shocked?

Oh who am I kidding.

I already know why. No need for me to fake my shock but I thought that if I did, then Lumine and Ichinose will get off my case.

Anyways, everyone else looked to Class D in surprise, it was the

fastest submission yet but Class D seemed composed because they had planned this, they had talked about this, they had agreed on this. I looked towards Ichinose and I noticed her smile cracking, it seems even she didn't expect such a sudden attack.

Class D stayed silent as they waited for the rest of the classes to submit their votes.....

" Hm, seems every class has voted truth! " Lumine says before turning to Hirata, " Hirata was it a truth or a lie?" She asked.

" **Truth.**" Hirata says.

" Correct!" Lumine announces happily.

My classmates smiled, this was a big revelation for them. Even if it was just one win, they managed to prove that their plan works. Though, it seems it has definitely aroused attention from the rest of the classes so that's a big con but at this point, anyone would do anything to shut down Ichinose's class.

" Class D, which class will you subtract 300 class points from?" Lumine asked.

" CLASS A!" My classmates yelled as if the life has returned to them for this moment.

I checked to see how Ichinose reacted to that, but her smile returned and seems well-maintained this time. However, she will remember this and so will I, that her smile had just cracked unintentionally, her mask has finally been affected even if it's just a bit. If anyone else had noticed that crack, then anyone can use it to their advantage and further escalate her breakdown if she DOES breakdown.

" Very well!" Lumine nods and the scoreboard begins changing.....

[Class A - 2060 cp - (-300) 1760 cp]

[Class B - 800 (+100) 900]

[Class C - 760 - (+100) 860]

[Class D - 400 - (+100) 700]

" You may return to your class now, Hirata!" Lumine dismisses him.

Hirata nods and returned to my classmates. Instead of wearing shocked expressions, confused, angered, or hateful looks, Class D smiles and cheers on Hirata. They knew about his truth the entire time and so it became unnecessary for them to feign shock or surprise because Hirata had told them....

I suppose there's nothing for me left to see. I might as well leave while Lumine dismisses them in a few minutes.

Placing my hands in my blazer's pockets, I turned around and left the gymnasium silently.

Hirata PoV

It really worked, huh...

The answer was there from the beginning. The first game in fact was a big factor in helping us formulate this simple plan, the first game contained a certain statement from Director Lumine and also an unforgettable action from Ayanokoji.

The statement;

" If you truly trust your classmates then there shouldn't be an issue, right? All you have to do is to discuss on whom to vote and agree."

After the events during and after the first game. During my time when I was eliminated, I've been thinking about her words. Trust. trust. trust. It kept ringing in my head. Trust is both an easy and hard thing to receive depending on the person themselves that are seeking. To receive trust, you will be evaluated by appearance, personality, and reputation.

If you're good in all three sections then trust is easy to receive, however, for a person that doesn't possess good levels in those three sections then it becomes quite hard to trust that person, to reveal your darkest secrets to that one person.

But in the end, after Horikita-san's truth, I finally formed a conclusion. Which I shared to the entire class during our break before the second round.

" Why don't we reveal our secrets right here and now?" I suggested to everyone seriously.

" What?" Everyone looked to me in disbelief.

" Are you serious?"

" Are you crazy?"

" Like hell I'm gonna share any secrets!"

" Hirata-kun do you know what you're asking of us?"

Words of protest all around. This was the problem we faced during the first game and yet nobody realizes it. It's honestly...irritating, but I have to do this now. It's our only chance to beat Ichinose's class.

" I'll start first then." I decided to not waste time.

" Huh? Wha-"

" I am responsible for my girlfriend...well....previous girlfriend's death." It took everything in me to say those words. My heart ached and the memories came rushing in but.....everyone's lives is at stake here. We need the points. We need to survive.

Everyone was silent as they looked to me in shock.

" H-Hirata-kun....what in the world are you trying to say-"

" It's exactly what you might think." I said.

" O-Oi, hold your horses there, Hirata.....I'm sure most of us are thinking right now that you.....*murdered*...her? If that's the case then-" Keisei tried to say but I quickly managed to correct him.

" W-Wait, no that's not what I'm trying to say." I told him. I should've thought through my words better but I feel extremely shaken despite looking and remaining calm to them.

I took a deep breath. I have to go through this, I mustn't break down for all of our sakes.

" One day, her and I got into an argument. I was angry, she was angry, we were both angry. But what I did next was

unforgiveable, I was angry to the point where I pushed her too hard and before I realized it, we were arguing at the stairs and since I pushed her.....she fell down the stone stairs....and all I heard was her neck snapping..." I looked down and clenched my fists.

" Hirata..."

" Hirata-kun..."

Before I knew it, tears began falling down to the floor. Those were my tears.

I hastily tried to wipe them away, nervously chuckling.

" H-Haha! s-sorry...I....I promised myself...I wouldn't cry but..." I choked on my words as the memories of her face began flooding in. The feelings I used to have....or the feelings I still have....

" D-Damn it....I....can't....forgive myself.....even now...." I thought I was thinking of my words, but at the time, I was spilling them without even realizing.

" If I wasn't so short-tempered....I....she....she would've still been here.....if I had changed back then to the person I am now.....then...." My heart ached even more.

To be the one sole responsible for the death of a loved one.....it's a feeling that no words can describe.....because it

always varies.

But in the end, the pain will always remain....you will never forget it....even if it fades you'll always remember the existence of the scars. Whether it be on your skin, or the scar within your heart....your soul.

It never disappears.

" Hirata." I felt a hand pat me on the back and I turned to see a person I'd never expect. It was Sudo.

" So you were short-tempered...? I don't know...well...I can try to understand your pain but....never fully...ergh...what I'm trying to say is-" He takes a deep breath before giving me a smile. " It was an accident. That time, you were angry and you weren't thinking clearly.....and....back at the first game....you were always there to stop me and I always found it weird because there was always that look in ya.....but now I know..."

"...So thanks....you potentially saved my life, man. I was so ready to march up to the director....I was so ready to kill her but...that would've been dumb and I'd regret it when it's already too late." He said.

"...You're welcome." I said to him.

It comforted me a bit.

"well...we only have so much time, right? I'll begin first then." Keisei suddenly spoke.

" My mom is a drug addict back home.....I turned to studying just so I could avoid her at all costs and eventually It became a huge part of who I am today. And now...I really want to graduate to escape from that home.....it's always been the worst ever since my mom and dad divorced because that's when our lives began spiraling downwards. I tried to help her but in the end, she wouldn't listen and so I've given up....and yet till this day, I wonder if I'm doing the right thing? If there's anything more I could try. But at the end of the day, my mind has already been made up and I'm determined to escape from it." Keisei confessed.

Keisei-kun....also has a rough life....

Slowly, everyone began confessing their secrets and their pasts, including the scarred Karuizawa-san who possesses a past that shocked most of us. It explains why she is the way she is, why she always present to others that she's headstrong and why she clings to me for support to gain trust and part of the leadership over the girls in our class.

Even when she was extremely hesitant, she managed to tell the same story she told me without breaking down. She did well.

It really helped us out.

Everyone in Class D began trusting each other and opening themselves up. Even if there was bitterness in the past between certain students, that was all put aside once enough people began sharing their pasts and we all agreed to keep it to ourselves.....however....

We all also agreed on sharing these secrets to certain people...

" So your plan worked, huh, Hirata?" A chuckle followed soon after as I heard those words. I turned around to see the leader of Class C himself, the so-called " Tyrant".

" Ah, Ryuen-kun, you're finally here." I greeted the magenta haired boy.

" Where is Sakayanagi-san?" I asked.

" Apologies, I had something to relay to my classmates before coming here." As if on cue, Sakayanagi-san has arrived with Kamuro-san.

" I'm impressed, Hirata-kun. I didn't expect for a class like yours to concoct a plan such as this....furthermore, it's quite bold of you to suggest this to us, your enemies." Sakayanagi says.

" Kukuku, I agree on that one. I thought only Ayanokoji would be able to come up with such a thing, but it seems there ARE some sharp tools in that dreadful shed. " Ryuen mocks.

Ignoring Ryuen's bad remarks, I proceeded to continue with business.

" Since my plan worked. Will the both of you agree in taking

part? You may be our enemies, without a doubt, but Ichinose-san is a bigger enemy for us now. Her class has a huge lead but with this plan, I'm confident that we can subtract as many class points as we desire so long as we follow it to the point." I said.

Sakayanagi-san and Ryuen-kun glances at each other before returning their gazes to me.

" Did Ayanokoji inspire you?" Ryuen suddenly asked.

" Why, yes, actually." I admitted.

" During the first game, he managed to use multiple voting slips at the same time. Director never stated that we COULDN'T do that during the first game.....and she hadn't forbidden it even in this game. " I said.

" Indeed....the way you intend for us to recycle that tactic in this plan is quite interesting..." Sakayanagi comments.

" Then are we all in agreement?" I said before pulling out an envelope which contained all the secrets of my classmates.

" And if I...perhaps decide to leak these secrets after the game?" Ryuen raised a brow.

" Don't worry, " I smiled. " Class D has a scapegoat if ever such a situation occurs."

Both Sakayanagi and Ryuen's eyes widened in surprise before the both of them began laughing. It seems they both understood who

exactly I'm referring to as our 'scapegoat'.

" Fufufu! Really now? How interesting!"

" Kukuku, how unexpectedly dirty of you to do, Hirata."

The both of them glanced at each other once more before pulling out their envelopes which contained the secrets of their classmates. All of it. As for my 'scapegoat', I truly hope that neither Ryuen nor Sakayanagi will break their promise but I highly doubt they'll keep it in the first place. I'm highly reluctant to use the scapegoat but if the situations calls for it then I will not hesitate...

I'm sorry, Ayanokoji-kun....but I can't let Class D lose.

Even if I have to drag your name further in the mud in order to protect our trust...

" Well then, there are a few flaws in this plan....It's not exactly my cup of tea but it has the likeliest chance of cutting Ichinose-san down a peg~" Sakayanagi says.

" Yeah, for the first time, I agree with you, Sakayanagi. Ichinose was a surprise but her reign won't last long....just like yours, kuku." Ryuen says, sending a verbal jab at the girl. Though, she seemed to put it aside for now.

" Well then," I presented them to an empty table. " Let's begin discussing before the third round starts. **After all, that's when we'll strike.**"

CHAPTER END!

There was supposed to be more for this chapter...but I had to cut off a few important things to save them for later!

In fact, my dumbass almost added something stupid at the beginning during the first draft for this chapter! It might've caught most of you off-guard but the effect is only temporary and won't help much in further chapters so I decided to cut it off and save it as a surprise.

Anyways... ignoring the small spoiler I said in the previous chapter's A/N....

It seems like Hirata has got a plan to win against Ichinose? A collab between Hirata, Ryuen, and Sakayanagi?

Next chapter.....nevermind.....no more spoilers!

I'll just let ya'll guess.

Anyways, I hope you enjoyed this chapter even though it lacked the critical and fast-paced action both mentally and physically like the last chapters....but yk...gotta calm down to set things up!

See u in the next episode!

KawaiiLumine, out!

Episode 13: Victory within reach

Kanzaki PoV

We were at the gymnasium

Everything should proceed as planned.

....still....

Ichinose's plan of winning....

It disturbs me. The aftermath of it all sounds unimaginable and yet, why do I feel like it'll really happen? Like she can will it to happen?

....With the way she has me on a leash.

With the way she's controlling our classmates while they're oblivious to her true self...

Do I want her to win?

Do I want to lose?

....I want to win but...

"Yo, Kanzaki! What's with the downcast look?" A hand pats my back.

I turn to see Shibata giving me a smile.

"Shibata..." I acknowledged.

"Are you all right? You've been wearing a sour look and I don't know why! I mean, aren't we winning?" He asked.

Are we?

Ah. That's right....

I look towards the current scores on the board.

[Class A - 1760 cp]

[Class B - 900 cp]

[Class C - 860 cp]

[Class D - 700 cp]

We're in the lead. And with Ichinose's plan, there's absolutely no way we could lose this unless someone in our class becomes a traitor....

Ichinose cannot be stopped.

Even if I wanted to.

" To start off the third round, I'll select Nishikawa Ryouko from Class B to step up on stage!"

Huh? The director isn't going to start with us?

It seems like she wants to go through this randomly now...

A couple minutes after the director announced that. A girl with white hair and blue eyes stepped on stage with a timid look on her face. She's nervous about the statement, I'm betting. But that is to be expected with how the past statements have gone.

Lumine clears her throat before continuing,

" Truth or Lie: Nishikawa has been dumped by tons of ex-boyfriends due to her boring personality! "

" Oof, that's gotta sting, huh." Lumine feigns a look of pity.

I watched as Nishikawa winced from the statement. What is she doing? She's making it way too obvious that the statement is true. Then again, she seemed like a timid girl from my first impressions of her and it turns out that I'm not too far off from the truth. It must be embarrassing for a girl like her to have something as private as personal relationships being exposed in front of everyone within our grade.

And as expected, our class submitted the first vote.

My class chose truth.

It's very likely that the other classes have done the same due to Nishikawa's failed attempt (or no attempt) in disproving the statement by remaining stone faced and unaffected, rather, she did the complete opposite and gave away all her emotions for us to see.

" The votes have arrived and it seems like only Class A has chosen to vote truth!" Lumine announced.

Huh?

Wait, did I hear that right? Our class is the only one that voted truth? Does that mean everyone submitted lies? But why? It's obvious that the statement regarding Nishikawa is true.....and yet.....we're only the class that decided to vote truth....

An uncomfortable feeling began surging within me. An uncertainty. I thought of my calming my worries by checking to see Ichinose's expression, if she's still keeping her usual fake act then that means that everything that has happened was to be expected. That she's still holding the strings.

However....

"...Ichinose..?" I whispered to myself in disbelief. Nobody heard my words. But I'm sure if they did, then they could also hear the shock, surprise, and fear that's lurking within my tone.

Ichinose wasn't smiling...

Her brows were furrowed....

W-Was this...not part of her plan?

Truth be told, she never mentioned anything about a possibility like this when she told me her plan earlier on. This was an event I could've never expected but the biggest shock is discovering that even Ichinose herself hadn't expected this...

My classmates seemed curious as to why the other classes voted lie instead of the obvious 'truth'. And they are unbeknownst to the feelings Ichinose and I are experiencing regarding this situation.

" Well, then. Nishikawa. Is it a **truth** or a **lie**?" Lumine asked.

Suddenly, Nishikawa's timid expression turned into a bored one in mere seconds.

Boredly, she said,

" **It's a lie.**"

WHAT?!

Sakayanagi PoV

Fufu~

You did a good job, Nishikawa-san~

She used to participate in the drama club back at junior high. She was quite passionate about it too and I'm glad that she among all the students in my class, was picked first for Class A in the third round. Her acting skills is unexpected and it did more damage than I expected when I glance towards Ichinose-san's expression.

That face of yours.....where did that confidence go, I wonder....

" Correct! It's a lie!" Lumine said. " You may now return to your class, Nishikawa."

Nishikawa-san nods and leaves the stage in silence.

" Oh~ It seems like Class A is the only class that got the answer wrong! Not only that, they were also the first to submit their votes....." Lumine giggles, " What a pity! "

" Well then....I do recall stating that if ever you get the wrong answer....then you will face grave consequences." The director's grin widened. " A consequence of my choosing...."

" Ah! I know!" Lumine snaps her fingers.

" Since Class A could've stolen points if their answers were correct. How about letting the class at the very bottom of the rankings steal 300 points from YOU!" Lumine points towards Class A.

I grinned at that. Although I'd very much prefer being given that advantage, I'm still enjoying the look of shock of those from Ichinose's class, especially, the look of Ichinose herself.

" Huh? Wait-" The Class A students tried to speak but it was too late.

The scoreboard had already begun changing....

[Class A - 1760 cp - (-300) 1460 cp]

[Class B - 900 cp - (+100) 1000 cp]

[Class C - 860 cp - (Demoted to Class D, +100) 960 cp]

[Class D - 700 cp - (Promoted to Class C, +300) 1000 cp]

The plan that Ryuen, Hirata and I concocted during the last break, is a plan that doesn't focus on defining the true winner of this game. Rather, this plan focuses on making sure that Ichinose

Honami's class ends at the very bottom, making her the one and only true **loser** of this **game**.

Kanzaki PoV

They're catching....up....

I thought....I thought they couldn't....

I thought Ichinose said our victory is guaranteed-

So why-

"Kanzaki-kun." The woman herself interrupted my train of thought. I looked to her and see her wearing a tight smile.

"You know what to do, yes?" She asked- no...she reminded me.

"Yes...but..." I glanced to my oblivious classmates, checking if they're watching Ichinose and I. But it was clear that they weren't, so I decided to lean closer to Ichinose's ear to whisper,

"Do you....really know what you're doing?" I dared to ask.

She looks at me.

" Of course I do." She said. But a part of me refused to believe her.

"....Ichinose I-"

" If you're thinking about lying instead of telling the truth when your statement arrives. We will lose class points because of you and I won't hesitate to destroy your reputation within our class....heh, I'm pretty sure either way, your reputation will be shattered throughout the school." She said with a sadistic grin.

"...." I averted my eyes at that.

She was right....

This was why I couldn't fight against her because I simply have no choice but to follow her way. Who am I to turn to? Who can assure me and keep me in the right? Nobody. And she knows that. I'm trapped in her web and to continue living, to continue receiving the gift of mercy, I shall follow her words without hesitation.

" All right, how about a student from Class A next! Hmmm..." Lumine goes into a thinking pose as she scans us with scrutinizing eyes. Her eyes surveyed us until it finally landed on me.

My throat suddenly felt dry as I mentally prepared myself.

" Kanzaki! Step up on stage!" She points to me and calls.

I nodded. My classmates wished me luck and so did Ichinose but not before sliding in a threatening gaze as a reminder.

I went up the stage, trying to maintain a stoic expression.

" All right, let's begin...." Lumine clears her throat.

" Truth or Lie: Kanzaki assaulted a female classmate back in junior high!"

All the girls gasped. All eyes were on me. It was true, I have indeed assaulted a female classmate back in my junior high. I had a bad temper and I was fed up with the people around me at the time, the moment the girls in my class began taunting me....it felt like I reached my limit. I just snapped.

Disregarding the consequences, I had stood up from my seat and went to one of the girls, grabbed her by the neck, and then pushing her to the ground. Raining down punches, bone vs bone, I left so many bruises on her face and I think I may have broken her nose. That was during my first year in junior high and I was sentenced to prison for 9 months and during those 9 months, I learned the true

consequences of my options. I was tormented relentlessly by even worse people in that prison, and I wished to never go through that again.

Throughout my junior high after I was released, nobody talked to me. Nobody dare send me a glance. But the atmosphere whenever I come into the picture always changes, and I could almost hear their thoughts of hatred for me. My bad temper ruined everything.....but...

I didn't dare let my true feelings slip in this game, I will do my best to not give away any sort of info from my expression.. Ichinose smiles, she must be satisfied with my act but before she could look towards our classmates to vote quickly-

" Class C has submitted their vote!"

Huh? That fast?!

What...but....how...

Ichinose's smile dropped again as she looked towards the other classes with shock. An expression I've never seen her wear until now. No....this has to be her act again, right? She couldn't have possibly been duped.....she's still controlling the strings...isn't she?

But why does that expression seem genuine?

My hands trembled.

" Class A has submitted second!" Lumine announces.

We were seconds too late. How did Class C submit their vote so fast? Are they just guessing...

No, I think I understand their intention. By gaining first place, they've perfectly evaded our attack by stealing the chance of gaining the stealing advantage. As long as we don't vote first, we are unable to steal points from other classes. If they can't stall or decrease our earnings, then the best they could do is slow us down by having us gain 100 class points per round instead of stealing 300 from others.

" Oh! Class B and Class D have now submitted their votes! All right then!" Lumine announced enthusiastically.

But Class C was foolish.

They forgot one important detail.

If their answers are wrong, then they gain nothing, and will have

to suffer Lumine's selected punishment-

" All classes voted **Truth!**"

Huh? Truth?

But....that's impossible...

Only my class should know the answer....only Ichinose should know the answer....so why-

" Kanzaki!" My train of thought halted as I looked towards the director.

" Is it a truth? Or is it a lie?" She grins.

....

I gazed at everyone who stared at me with scrutiny. The girls especially were sending glares my way but hidden beneath their facade was fear, fear of being hurt by me. But their gazes didn't matter.

I looked towards Ichinose. The only woman who knows everything-

No.....

She wasn't looking at me.....her eyes were averted from me....and her expression....looked sullen...

No....

NO!

ICHINOSE WHAT THE HELL?! YOU HOLD MY REPUTATION HOSTAGE, THREATENING TO EXPOSE MY PAST IF I REFUSE TO COOPERATE AND WHEN I HAVE COOPERATED, WHEN I PLACED A SENSE OF BELIEF THAT YOUR PLAN WILL COME TO FRUITION-

YOU DARE WEAR THAT LOOK OF UNCERTAINTY?!

I clenched my fist.

My stoic expression began cracking. The temper I thought I've done well to control....was slowly rising once more. My vision focused on Ichinose alone, burning holes through her image with my gaze alone.....I wanted.....to beat her.....to a pulp....

Thwack!

I suddenly felt a sharp pain from the back of my head. I immediately placed a hand on the spot and looked towards the director, the person my mind immediately assumed to have hit me-

" Is it a truth or a lie?" She repeated, amusement in her tone. This woman, she knew that I was about ready to burst and she's only trying to escalate it further-

Wait....

Escalate....

.....

I.....I was about ready to burst....?

Shit.....I.....I was about to commit another mistake.....a mistake that could send me to jail....i can't....go through that again....

Tch....Ryuji....you have to maintain whatever inner peace you have left....

The best I could do....at this very moment....

" It's....." I hesitated.

" Its...?" Lumine smiles.

"...Truth..."

" Aww man! I thought you would go and lie but...oh well! It is indeed truth!" Lumine shrugs.

I looked down to the floor.

" Class C, which class will you steal 300 points from?" I hear Lumine ask.

Hirata PoV

I feel bad for Kanzaki-kun.

However, I must stick to the plan.

And the answer as to who I'd pick....is obvious.

" Class A." I told the director. She smiles and nods.

I hear my classmates sighing in relief, whispering to each other in joy.

The scoreboard began changing....

[Class A - 1460 cp - (Demoted to Class B -300) 1160 cp]

[Class B - 1000 cp - (Demoted to Class C, + 100) 1100 cp]

[Class C - 1000 cp - (Promoted to Class A, + 300) 1300 cp]

[Class D - 960 cp - (+100) 1060 cp]

We're Class A....

" W-We're Class A...." I hear Keisei say in shock.

" It almost...feels like a dream..." Horikita-san says.

Indeed.....this felt.....amazing...

" Let's goooooo!" The boys loudly celebrated.

The girls also said their cheers and sounds of joy but I quickly calmed everyone down and reminded them that the round isn't over just yet. Everyone quickly listened and toned down their excitement till there was none to be found, opting to focus on the next moves.

" All right! Seems like the defective class finally made it to the very top! Awesome!" The director applauded before focusing once more.

" Next up, I'd like to call a student from the new Class A! " Lumine announced.

All right, It's Ryuen's turn to steal the points.

My classmates may be shocked at first, but it won't matter, so long as we stay safe and Ichinose-san's class crumble further and further till they are no longer a threat in this game. There is no need to worry about any counter-attack in this plan, since this was a collaboration with Ryuen and Sakayanagi.

Ichinose-san will not win.

I glanced towards Ichinose-san's expression and her smile was no longer there. It felt unusual, but it was a sign that even SHE knows that her time is up. She's lost control.

Ryuen PoV

That look on your face makes you seem a bit hotter than usual, Ichinose. Kukuku...

Seeing such a look on her face is pleasing to my eyes. But putting that aside, It's time to finally kick her down a notch.

" Onodera Kayano, please come up on stage!"

Oh. That chick from the swimming club, eh?

A girl with short brown hair stepped up to the stage with fake confidence written all over her expression. She was just cheering with her classmates a while ago after having reached Class A, but being on stage where your secret might or might not be exposed is another intimidating thing on its own regardless of Class rank.

Come on....

Tell us the statement already....

" Truth or Lie: Onodera was exposed in junior high when it was discovered that she was doping in the swimming competition! "

Heh. Just as expected.

Still, doping, huh.

I thought she was a woman with passion for her sport, but perhaps she has too much passion which eventually led to her resorting to drugs for a small boost in her athletic performance. Everyone who is unaware of her secret, must be calm since ' cheating' is the least problematic exposure when compared to Horikita's brother raping her and Kanzaki apparently assaulting a female classmate.

I had already submitted our votes first without question. I felt myself smirking and my laughter threatening to escape me once I take away 300 points from Ichinose's class.

" All votes are in! And it seems like everyone voted truth! " Lumine then looks towards Onodera. " Is it a truth or a lie?"

" It's....truth, sadly..." Onodera answered glumly but still kept a small smile.

" Correct! All right then." Lumine applauds before staring right at me with a grin.

" Class D, which class-"

" Class B." I said, impatiently.

" Sheesh! Seems everyone's got a grudge against Ichinose's class!" She sighed with fake pity, " Well, rules are rules!" she said before the scoreboard began changing....

[Class A - 1300 cp - (+ 100) 1400 cp]

[Class B - 1160 cp - (Demoted to Class D, -300) 860 cp]

[Class C - 1100 cp - (+ 100) 1200 cp]

[Class D - 1060 cp - (Promoted to Class B, + 300) 1360 cp]

Kukuku!

Take that ya over confident goody two shoes bitch!

Kanzaki PoV

Class D....

We're....Class D...?

" T-They overtook us...."

" But we had such a huge lead..."

" Where did we go wrong...."

" And...Kanzaki with the history of assault?"

" I couldn't believe it..."

" I'm scared..."

" Why is going downhill?!"

The girls and boys in my class snapped out from their friendship is magic wonderland for once and began to register the current situation. Their whispers contained opinions about me and about the results with both topics being absolutely horrible on their own.

I looked towards Ichinose.

She had her head down....

Was she feeling ashamed?

Did she deduced that she truly lost?

....

Perhaps this was the best thing that could've happened....

Despite Ichinose's ' true' self, her self in which she is cruel and manipulative, but the fact remains that she is indeed a good leader. But unexpectedly arrogant when she wants to be. But with this loss, she can be humbled....she can learn.....like how I learned from my mistakes.....and the same will apply to her. Yes, perhaps this was the best route after all...

" All right, everyone! Round three is over! Let's have lunch break, yeah? Please assemble back here at 1 pm! See you soon!"

Ayanokoji PoV

Everyone left soon after.

In 10 minutes, the gym was finally empty....

Nobody was here...

With the exception of myself....

And the strawberry blonde girl, who had not once lifted her head since her class was demoted. Her gaze seemed attached to the floor.

It was just us two.

Third Person PoV

Ayanokoji, hands in his pockets, approached Ichinose with slow footsteps which sounded and echoed throughout the empty gym. His gaze focused on her figure, but she hadn't yet faced him. He finally stopped a few meters away from her.

"....Ayanokoji-kun...." The girl spoke in a tone unusual to Ayanokoji.

" Ichinose." Was all he replied.

" Can you believe it...?"

" That you've been demoted? Initially, no. But it seems the other classes suprised us both with the results." Ayanokoji replied, his tone nonchalant.

Ichinose releases a dark chuckle before placing a hand on her mouth.

" Indeed....who knew....." She placed her other hand on her stomach.

" They really....caught me off guard..." She said.

Ayanokoji nodded, agreeing with her. This whole round was a surprise to him as well but not for the reasons everyone might think.

" Who knew....." Her shoulders began trembling. Ayanokoji sighs.

" I can't....I-I r-really can't...." She began to giggle to herself, but it was audible to Ayanokoji.

" I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY'RE THAT STUPID!"

" Hahahahahahahah!" She bursted into a fit of giggles, " Hehehehehe!" Her shoulders trembled even more as she began to hunch forward.

Ayanokoji closes his eyes.

He, too, can't believe that the other classes committed that **mistake** so early in the game....

' It's over.' Ayanokoji thought with finality.

He opened his eyes to see Ichinose trying to contain herself from smiling and laughing like maniacally, but was failing horribly in trying to contain it. Ayanokoji clenched his fists that were hidden in the depth of his blazer's pockets.

' Ichinose...has already won.' He concluded before turning around and leaving the gym, completely leaving the demented, lunatic, strawberry-haired woman all in her lonesome. Laughing to herself, to her pleasure.

" I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT ROUND~! ♥ " Her words echoed.

Chapter End!

Whew, finally done with this episode!

Ichinose's plan will finally be revealed in the next episode!

Also a more proper explanation of Ryuen,Hirata, and Sakayanagi's plan will be in the next episode!

It might be a long one but it's gonna be fun for me to write~!

Also for those who don't know....it seems like someone has made a reaction to a certain in this godawful fic!

Check out @MightyAsmodeus reaction fic and see the latest chapter! Don't forget to leave a vote on his fic!

Anyways.

see ya in the next episode!

KawaiiLumine, out~

Episode 14: Perfect Victory

Lumine PoV

I was in my office, currently sitting and relaxing. However, it was hard to contain my excitement in this game.

" Hm?" I looked towards my computer monitor and noticed a new email.

I decided to slide my chair closer to the desk so i can use my computer to check out what the email is about. I clicked on the email and I was met with an important message from one of my employees.

My eyes widened on the message.

' Dear Director Lumine,

This is Kazumi Shoko. The one you assigned to this task 3 months ago? I'm sending this email to inform you of the students' progress. The attachment below this message contains all the information you need.

Attachment

Oh. And also, regarding another matter...'

I read on and hummed to myself, thinking. The second years are doing well and other certain exceptions too. This is truly the greatest school year in the making! Entertainment all around! the deeper we get into the year, the more chaos will appear. I absolutely love that scenario that will, without a doubt, occur!

Also...the email contained a certain reminder.

I typed my response to Kazumi's email. Saying that she'll get her definitive answer once Game 2 ends, but for now, she will continue doing her job as usual and keep me posted on their weekly progress.

Oh! I should probably take my pills or else that girl will come nag me about it again.

I opened my drawer and took out my pills. I placed them in my mouth before grabbing my water jug and then flushed the pills down my throat by drinking said water. I released a sigh of relief before closing my water jug and placing it back on the table.

Now, I think lunch time should be over now. Time to get back to the gymnasium-

Suddenly, the door opened. I stopped myself from getting up once I saw who it was at the door. I sat back down with a grin.

" Oh~? What brings you here?" I asked, interested.

She walked towards me and stood in front of my desk. I looked up into her blue eyes. They were soft, they were the eyes she uses whenever she tries to act all cutesy in front of others. The only time she's ever genuine is when she's with me.

" Lumine..." She says before bowing her head respectfully.

" What brings you here, Honami?" I asked.

She stopped bowing her head and then she grins at me, mischief was written all over her expression. It aroused a familiar excitement which made my heart pound. I loved that look.

And before I could say anything else, her next words blocked all my thoughts out....

Oh....this is going to be interesting....

Hirata PoV

Our plan involves secretly cooperating with the other class leaders except those from Ichinose's class. By revealing our classmate's secrets to each other, then we are most likely to win the statements over Ichinose's class by submitting quicker than her.

Even if our answers are wrong, so long as we get first place, then that means Ichinose will not hold the steal advantage but instead only gain +100 class points. This strategy led to her downfall to Class D while my class easily ascended to Class A with Sakayanagi and Ryuen not too far away.

But it doesn't matter. So long as we deplete Ichinose's points and have her remain Class D while everyone else prospers, then that's all that matters. This is a temporary truce between myself, Ryuen, and Sakayanagi and we agreed to hold onto that truce unless one of us decides to betray the other or become suspicious of scheming against the other, if that happens, then the two parties are free to destroy the traitor's class along with Ichinose's.

Ichinose knows nothing of our classes. No secrets. In simple words, she's absolutely defenseless.

During the last round, I believe we only guessed it to be truth and were lucky to get it right. And because of that, it gave us an even bigger advantage when we noticed Kanzaki-kun's face losing its composure and the same applied to Ichinose.

This is **perfect victory** for everyone but her class.

We'll seal their fate in the upcoming Round 4.

Kanzaki PoV

I arrived with my class. We were silent.

We were actually the last class to arrive. All eyes were on us when we stepped inside the gym, and although they may not be outright mocking us with their words,

Their eyes says it all.

They're looking down on us as if we were previously acting all high and mighty but in reality, that never occurred. Not one of us gloated or boasted about our previous position in the ranking, except maybe Ichinose herself but I doubt they caught onto her subtle gloating.

Well, it doesn't really matter whether or not it was revenge against Ichinose. Rather, it's just how they saw us when we stood at the top. Everyone here seems to think that the most superior people will often look down on others as if they're peasants, while that may be possible, such a thing does not apply to all classes.

My class in particular, they are too kind for their own good. Too cooperative for their own good. **Too blind for their own good.**

Out of everyone in my class, only Ichinose Honami is likely to look down on others. Or has she already done that in the past? I don't know. Ever since that surprise attack and our unexpected demotion, it's been interfering with my reasoning and train of thought. I just want this game to end.

I've accepted the fact that we've already lost.

Soon, the director finally arrived on stage with a bigger grin than usual.

" Sorry I'm late everyone! I was caught up in something at the very last moment. " The director apologized.

" Anyways, let's begin the fourth round!"

I sighed in defeat....

" How about we begin with the new Class A? " Lumine grinned and looked towards Hirata's class.

Tch. You're just giving them more points, dammit.

Although accepting of defeat, I still felt bitter. My secret has been exposed and once again, I'll be all alone. Shunned by everyone else. And all of that is due to Ichinose letting go of the strings, losing control, and destroying our class with her own actions.

" **Karuizawa Kei** from Class A. Please get on stage!" Lumine called.

Ah, those gyaru types of girls huh...

I hate those types the most. I don't care much for my surroundings but during the first month, I witnessed how Karuizawa Kei acted with some lower girls. She acts all superior in popularity, which she is, she's decently popular around our grade due to her beauty but her personality often overshadows that aspect. Especially the way she acts towards others.

" All right! Let's begin with the first statement...." She says.

Huh?

Something feels off...

I don't why. But I instinctively turned to Ichinose to check her expression and-

That grin....

I didn't know at the time what was going to happen. I thought Ichinose's plan would fail and deemed unsalvagable....however...I was wrong.

Because in the very next moment,

I learned that just like the director, when Ichinose makes a promise. She does not disappoint.

Ichinose speaks no lie.

" Truth or Lie: Karuizawa Kei has been bullied her whole school life."

I noticed the girl in question flinching once she heard the statement.

I felt like sighing. Seems like it's another easy win for Hirata's class. Perhaps the strange ' feeling' I felt was my own paranoia. Perhaps I'm going insane after all.

The classes began writing down their votes until-

" Oh? Why are you guys writing your votes? I'm not done yet."

" Huh?" Everyone froze, me included. We looked towards the director with confused expressions and she stared back at us with a smile that only grew wider, her eyes containing mischief and excitement.

What?

" Let me continue." She wags a finger at us, as if we were little children.

" Karuizawa Kei has been kicked down, pushed around, verbally abused, physically abused, was forced to eat trash both at home and at school-"

" H-Huh?!" Karuizawa turned to look at Lumine with shock. But the latter continued speaking,

" Her parents absolutely despised her existence and only saw her as nothing but profit. They often force her to do compensated dating back in Junior high, and during one of her many dates with older men....she also lost her virginity."

" S-STOP IT! STOP TALKING!" Karuizawa yelled, her face flushed, and tears threatening to seep out.

" The only time Karuizawa was treated with decent food was with the spare money she hid from her parents, which she used to buy the bland lunch in her junior high. And also the dinner she's treated to whenever she goes on dates with those middle aged men-"

Everyone was shocked.

Why was it this detailed?

Why is Lumine still continuing?

Whispers all around. Whispers of shock. This felt even more disturbing to hear than Horikita's exposed secret because this time, the secret being revealed....is too detailed....

" P-PLEASE STOP!" Karuizawa said with urgency. She looked incredibly panicked.

But Lumine was merciless...

" But one day, she was caught red-handed by her peers. A photo leaked. And every student in the school was well aware of Karuizawa's ' adventures' -"

" S-STOP IT!" Karuizawa tried to rush towards Lumine in an attempt to push her down or tackle her or anything physical to force the director to stop talking.

But it bore no fruit, since the Director quickly countered her by aiming a front kick right on her stomach, sending her to the floor and landing on her butt. The director gave her an evil look before continuing on....

" As a result, the bullying got even worse. Some boys even going as far as to ask for her ' services' . The girls made a joke out of her, the boys made a slut out of her. The school refused to save her."

Karuizawa clutched herself protectively on the floor as tears poured down, her breathing hoarse.

Why....Why is Lumine saying all this?

Did....Did Ichinose have something to do with this?

I widened my eyes as I began to realize something. Back at the break, Ichinose was nowhere to be seen and although her friend were worried, everyone assumed that she was just isolating herself for a bit to try and regain composure, thinking that she was affected by the sudden demotion. I, too, thought the same.

But...what if...

What if she did something else?

" And then when Karuizawa's parents found out about the leaks. They punished her and had her starve for a week, isolating her in her own room, and occasionally using her as a stress relief punching bag. No love from her parents. No love from her peers. No love for herself. Karuizawa Kei was a broken doll."

Karuizawa stared at the ground, her tears clearly hitting the floor. She failed to hold back her sobs.

Everyone watched in shock. A detailed 'statement' such as this was completely unexpected....

But it seems like Lumine was finished....

" Anyways....everyone!" She smiles towards all of us again. As if she just didn't break down a person a few seconds ago.

" You may submit your votes!" She cheered.

" Oh! Class A submitted first!" Lumine said.

It seems, even though they were shocked.....they submitted first. With that thought in mind, I sighed and looked down in defeat.

...It seems like they're getting free points again-

" Hold that thought, Kanzaki-kun." Someone's voice said.

" Huh?" I looked towards its originator, Ichinose.

She turns to me....with that smile.

" **Watch.**" She points towards the stage with a grin.

' *Watch*' ?

I silently obeyed and looked towards the stage with confusion. I had no idea what was going to happen but I felt uncomfortable in its anticipation.

" All the votes have arrived!" Lumine says.

" All of them voted truth!" She said.

But Class A is first...

" Well then, Karuizawa!" Lumine suddenly crouched right in front of Karuizawa's crying figure.

Lumine places a finger under Karuizawa's chin and slowly lifts it up to where they can stare each other in the eye.

Such contrasting emotions.

Karuizawa's eyes looked desperate, sad, and panicked.

While Lumine's eyes.....it just looked....evil.

" Tell me, Karuizawa."

" Is it a truth? Or is a lie?"

Is this it?

Is this what Ichinose wants me to keep watch of-

" L-Lie!" Karuizawa yelled.

Huh?

" KARUIZAWA!" I hear Hirata yell. I looked towards him and he wore a look of disbelief.

Wait....did she actually-

" What was that? Could you repeat it?" Lumine smirked.

" IT'S A LIE! A LIE! A LIE! A LIE!" Karuizawa yelled even louder.
As if she was going insane.

" All according to plan~" I hear Ichinose say.

A-All....a-according to plan?!

" Lie, huh.....**wrong.**"

Lumine stands up and looks towards all of us.

" **TRUTH IS CORRECT!**"

" KARUIZAWA WHY DID YOU ANSWER THAT?!"

" WHY DID YOU CHOKE!"

" DAMN IT, KARUIZAWA!"

Hirata's classmates expressed their disappointment in the girl. With complete disregard of her past situation, they only cared about winning.....they showed no care for her. But cruel as it may be, Karuizawa threw them under the bus after gaining the lead.....so are their insults against justified? Their anger justified? Or are they just as big of a hypocrite as Karuizawa if faced and given a similar statement.

Karuizawa finally realized the situation and remorse quickly replaced her panicked expression.

" N-No, w-wait! I meant truth!" She tried to take it back but it was in vain.

" Nice try, slut!" Lumine rolls her eyes amusingly.

" Anyways," She smiles to Hirata's class. " Since your classmate lied, then the same punishment from last round will apply here. 400 class points deducted and added to Class D's amount. Class A will not gain the steal advantage!" She said.

Class D...

We're Class D....

[Class A - 1400 - (Demoted to Class D, + 300) 1000 cp]

[Class B - 1360 - (Promoted to Class A, + 100) 1460 cp]

[Class C - 1200 cp - (Promoted to Class B, + 100) 1300 cp]

[Class D - 860 cp (Promoted to Class C, + 400) 1260 cp]

" Ohhh~ What a shame!" Lumine shrugs.

" Anyways-"

" N-NO WAIT! CHANGE THE SCORE! I MEANT TO SAY TRUTH!"
Karuizawa continued to beg.

" Are you begging now? How cute!" Lumine clasped her hands.

" As much as I'd love to see more.....but...." Her eyes suddenly darken.

" My words are final, Karuizawa."

She said that in a cold tone. It sent shivers down my spine, the director was always threatening but there was some twisted sense of enthusiasm in her tone that could ease the atmosphere but during the times where she spoke coldly with no emotion....that's when she's at her scariest.

Karuizawa backed away and stumbled a bit.

She couldn't say anything. She could only cover her mouth, desperately trying to hold back her sobs.

Eventually her friends snapped out of their shock and went to the stage to collect Karuizawa....

How....why would...

" The more detailed your past is stated with. Then the more likely you are to crack. And when you crack, you lose composure, when you lose composure, you lose proper reasoning. You lose yourself." Ichinose whispered. " It's amazing how the human mind operates, no?" She smirks.

I looked to her silently.

" Ichinose....how did you-"

" Moving onto Sakayanagi's class! Class B. " Our conversation was interrupted. Ichinose stopped talking and turned back to the stage with the same smile on her face. I wanted to know what exactly she

did but I have no choice but to wait until the rounds ends...

" How about we call.....Ah! Let's go with **Katsuragi Kohei!**" She said.

A bald student with an intimidating body frame walked up the stage with a serious expression. Katsuragi Kohei. A tough opponent to crack 1 on 1 due to his massive composure, but that was proven otherwise during the first game. I had no idea why or how he lost composure during the first game but that doesn't matter now.

I'm sure no statement can crack Katsuragi of the former Class A.

" All right....ahem..." Lumine clears her throat.

" Truth or Lie: Katsuragi has a twin sister....." Lumine pauses and looks towards Katsuragi with a devilish smirk.

" A twin sister he betrayed."

" Huh?" Katsuragi looks at Lumine with shock.

Everyone stayed silent. The dread began to rise up, this was going to go down the same route Karuizawa's exposure gone to.

" Katsuragi has a twin sister that's ill. He was provided money by those around him, because they supported his sister and him. They wanted to help. But apparently-"

" D-DIRECTOR, DON'T CONTINUE!" Katsuragi puts his hand out. He was sweating nervously.

What? What is she going to reveal...?

" -apparently he had used a total amount of 100,000 yen that was initially intended to pay off the hospital fees and medication his sister has to take. Instead, he used that same money to-"

" HEY STOP!"

" - gamble. He gambled all his money away to some pretty shady people. "

" NOT TRUE!" Katsuragi yelled.

" As a result, he lost everything. It doesn't help the fact that Katsuragi and his sister were orphans so they had no parents or parental figure to turn to. Their lives were endangered because the older and supposed to be ' mature' twin brother had forsaken it all. "

" It's not-"

" It's not?" Lumine interrupted and narrowed her eyes at Katsuragi. " What are you trying to say? Are you trying to say it's not a **truth**?"

" IT'S NOT TRUE!"

" Really? Then is it a **lie**?"

" IT'S A LIE!"

Wait...

The moment Katsuragi affirmed that. Lumine bursts out in laughter.

" AHHAHAHAHAHAHA! AND NOW YOU COMMITTED ANOTHER MISTAKE!" she said and continued laughing, hands on her belly, as if this was the funniest joke she's heard.

What is she talking about?

" Hehehe..." I noticed Ichinose giggle to herself.

Then I noticed a pen on her hand.

Wait....did she....already submit the answer?

" M-Mistake...? What are you saying!" Katsuragi stuttered.

" ONLY ONE CLASS HAS VOTED! AND THEY VOTED TRUTH!"
Lumine then points towards us. " AND IT'S THIS CLASS!"

" WHAT?!" Everyone exclaimed in shock, including my own classmates.

" w-wait! we didn't s-submit our votes yet!"

" A-And what do you m-mean ' mistake'! What did Katsuragi commit!"

" YOU DIDN'T STATE ANYTHING LIKE THIS IN THE RULES!"

Lumine cuts them off.

" Seriously! Dumbasses! All of you! Do you not realize it? Please use your brain!" She chirped sweet.

" WE DON'T! WE DON'T GET IT!" A few angry students from Katsuragi's class exclaimed.

" Fine then~" Lumine regains her composure.

She points towards Katsuragi.

" The idiot already said it was a lie." She mocks.

" Huh? B-But what about our votes-"

" Did I EVER state in the rules that I have to wait for EVERY vote? As long as one class votes, then it's valid! So..." She begins giggling uncontrollably.

" THE CLASSES THAT DIDN'T VOTE ARE AUTOMATICALLY WRONG! EVERYONE EXCEPT ICHINOSE'S CLASS WILL BE DEDUCTED 400 POINTS!"

" NO, WAIT! THAT'S UNFAIR!" Katsuragi said in a broken tone.

" What do you mean?" Lumine tilts her head. " Class C already submitted their vote. And...you even said it was a lie. I asked you if it was a truth and then I asked you if it was a lie. I may have worded it differently but the essence, the meaning, remains the same, no?" She walks towards Katsuragi.

" You screwed up, Ka-tsu-ra-gi~" She winks with her tongue peeping out.

" N-No..." Katsuragi was in denial.

But the scoreboard was already changing....

[Class A - 1460 cp - (Demoted to Class B, -400) 1060 cp]

[Class B - 1300 cp - (Demoted to Class C, -700) 600 cp]

[Class C - 1260 cp - (Demoted to Class A, + 300) 1560 cp]

[Class D - 1000 cp - (-400) 800 cp]

Huh? Why did Sakayanagi's class lose 700 points?

" HEY! HOW COME WE LOST 700 CLASS POINTS?!"

" WASN'T IT SUPPOSED TO BE 400?"

" IS IT AN ERROR?"

Multiple students from Sakayanagi's class were desperate as they pleaded Lumine to ' correct' the score. Or at the very least, an explanation as to why 700 points were subtracted from their amount. But after a moment of processing it, I quickly realized the reason why...

Ichinose....how far are you going to go...?

" An error? nope! You see, something else was written in the voting slip of Class C- well...Class A now. " She grins. " It said this; "**I choose to deduce 300 points from Sakayanagi's class**". And since the voting slip was not only the first to be submitted, it was also correct. Thus, I complied fairly!" She said.

" W-WHAT?!"

We're Class A again.....but Ichinose doesn't plan to stop there....

I shouldn't feel bad. Isn't this good? We gained the lead again due to her actions...whatever her actions were. Despite feeling relieved, I also felt bad for the other classes- no, ' bad' is an understatement. I felt dread and worry for them.....and also fear for them.....because they're unaware of Ichinose's nature....

On the contrary, my own classmates seemed to have lightened up at the fact that we're back on top.

" Man! Sakayanagi and Hirata's class are walking on thin ice!" Lumine remarks.

I checked Sakayanagi's class for their facial reactions. But Sakayanagi's face looked devastated, it was strange.....she always had the aura of a lion....but now.....it's gone. Almost like a scared little cat.

I looked towards Hirata's expression. His expression seemed calm on the outside but I had no doubt that he was just as panicked. Being demoted back to the bottom and with 600 points....they're on the verge on starting back at the very beginning.

" Anyways! Let's go to Ryuen's class this time....hmm....oh! Let's go with Ishizaki!" she said.

" Shit shit shit shit..." I hear the boy named Ishizaki repeatedly cursing to himself quite loudly as he walked to the stage.

What will Lumine reveal this time?

No, rather, will Ichinose get it right first or submit it first? Ryuen is a different opponent, he doesn't hesitate when it comes to acting on one's impulse. Without a doubt, the first answer that will come to mind he will most likely strike first.

" Truth or Lie: Ishizaki was a skilled fighter back in his

middle school, he was feared by everyone in his neighborhood, a pretty mischievous kid. He got into several fights and each fight only accumulated to his reputation."

That....sounds relatively normal? He sounds just like a typical delinquent which means this is an easy truth....

But if that's the case....then why....is his face disgruntled? or rather, his face looking panicked?

" Class A submitted first!" Lumine announced.

Huh? We submitted first? But how?

" Look at Ryuen-kun's face." I hear Ichinose whisper without looking at me.

I did as she said and to my surprise, Ryuen was wearing an unsure expression. His eyes were locked with Ishizaki's panicked eyes.

No way...

Is it because.....Ishizaki lied about his past?

But isn't he one of Ryuen's main lackeys? Ryuen would recruit those who know how to fight or defend themselves at the very least, is this an implication that Ishizaki is mediocre or even lower than his alleged reputation? Was it all just a facade Ryuen or Ishizaki carefully crafted to protect themselves? To build a dangerous reputation to be feared in this school...?

" How many lies...." I muttered to myself.

" The votes have arrived! And only Class A, B, and C submitted Lies while Class D submitted truth!"

In the end, it seems like Ryuen second guessed his answer and selected Lies which...seem likely to be correct.

" So, Ishizaki, is it a **truth** or a **lie**?" Lumine asked.

" Lie!" Ishizaki said immediately.

" Correct!" Lumine cheered and clapped. " Good job! Your leader MUST feel relieved."

Ishizaki visibly melted into a state of relief. But if I were him, I wouldn't celebrate too much since....his enemy class still got the

correct answer first. I looked towards Class D and their faces look depressed, their noises turning to silence.

...

" Anyways, Class A! Who will you subtract 300 points from this time-"

" Class B!" Ichinose answered.

" Class B it is!" Lumine nods. " Too bad Class D made an incorrect answer, a shame I suppose!" She shrugs before the scoreboard began changing....

[Class A - 1560 cp - (+ 300) 1860 cp]

[Class B - 1060 cp (, - 300) 760 cp]

[Class C - 600 cp - (+ 100) 700 cp]

[Class D - 600 cp - (-400] 200 cp]

Class D was only getting worse and worse....

Our lead is only getting higher and higher....

" Yikes! 200 class points for Class D? What a dire situation! " Lumine feigned pity.

No sounds were heard from Class D. It seems they were nearly accepting defeat. The aura around them is depressing, similar to how we felt....when we thought we were losing.

" Anyways....Let's end Round 4 once and for all. Calling Shiranami Chihiro from the back to back Class A holders!" She said.

Shiranami?

" Um..." I hear footsteps shuffling. I looked behind me to see an uncomfortable Shiranami being encouraged by her close friends.

One of her close friends, was Ichinose Honami herself....which led me to a question...

Does she care?

At all?

Is everything about her truly fake? All the bonds she made? The unity she inspired? All of it.....was never genuine on her behalf?

I hope to find that answer now...

There is no doubt that Ichinose probably knows Shiranami's deepest secrets because she is her friend. So as a good friend, it should be natural for Ichinose to hesitate writing the correct answer if the statement is 'bad'. As a good friend, her answer would be delayed a bit, because of the hesitation. Because she knows Shiranami will never be instantly okay.

Shiranami Chihiro...my first impressions of her? An absolute nerve ball. But with ichinose and her other friends, she's very friendly and open but deep down, her roots, are being shy and closed off from others.

It was only until my classmates persisted in entering her life that she finally began opening up easier.

....

Shiranami finally stood on the stage, her eyes nervously switched from us and towards the stage floor.

" All right..." Lumine clears her throat before speaking the last statement for the round.

But at the corner of my eye, Ichinose already written down something on the voting slip.

" Truth or Lie: Shiranami Chihiro has feelings for Ichinose Honami!"

" H-Huh?! H-How-?" Shiranami's face turned red and she began stuttering.

My classmates gasped and shared looks of surprise. And so did everyone else in the gym, this by far, had to be the most....normal....and yet still embarrassing secret exposed.

" Class A already submitted!"

It seems I have my answer....

Ichinose Honami...is a horrible person.

She didn't waste time in throwing away someone's true feelings. She doesn't care about that at all. In fact, I have a feeling she knew this statement was coming.

Or...

She set this statement up along with the rest of them....

" Honami-chan?! You submitted so fast!" Amikura asked that **creature**.

The creature smiles apologetically and spoke with an innocent, convincing tone...

" Sorry! I just didn't want any of the other classes to gain the steal advantage..." She chuckles nervously.

" O-Oh....but won't we lose 400 points if we're wrong?" Ando inquired.

The creature replies, " But it's better to let them gain a mere 100 class points rather than giving them the opportunity of stealing from us, right?" It shot back.

" Hmm..." Everyone hummed, taking in her words.

Suddenly, the creature turns to me with...a disgusting....fake look.

" You agree, right, Kanzaki-kun?" It asked.

" Yeah.....Ichinose...has a point." I struggled to even say her name. I didn't want to. But I had to act convincing for my class's sake.

" Hmm...all right then..." Ando and Amikura asked no further.

" Votes came in! Everyone voted truth!" Lumine announced.

As expected, this time it was completely obvious.

" All right, Shiranami. Is it a **truth** or is it a **lie**?" The director asked.

" U-Um...." Shiranami's eyes shifted towards us. But I had a feeling it was focused on Ichinose alone.

Eventually, she sighed and looked back to the director.

" T-Truth..." She confessed.

" How brave! Correct!" Lumine cheers.

" Since Class A once again gained the advantage, who will you vote pick-"

The answer was obviously going to be Class B or C since they have the most points compared to Class D. That was the pattern the creature followed.

" **Class D!** " The creature said in a sweet tone.

Huh?

Wait, but Class D only has 200 points....wouldn't that-

" Class D? How cruel! " Lumine remarks.

But the scoreboard already began changing....

[Class A - 1860 cp - (+ 300) 2160 cp]

[Class B - 760 cp - (+ 100) 860]

[Class C - 700 cp - (+ 100) 800 cp]

[Class D - 200 cp - (-300) - (-) 100 cp)

N-Negative 100...

" N-NO!"

" N-N-NEGATIVE?!"

" WHY!"

" DIRECTOR PLEASE! PLEASE RECONSIDER THE SCORING! PLEASE JUST KEEP US AT ZERO AT THE VERY LEAST!"

Sounds of protest and desperation were heard from the students in Class D.

" What? Why are you all suprised? Didn't I make it clear that this CAN happen? And it just did!" Lumine smiles.

" But this is the first time this ACTUALLY happened! This year's Class D is truly a fortunate and misfortunate bunch! It's hilarious and yet deserves praise!" Lumine laughs.

Class D was silenced due to disbelief.

They were quickly reminded that their words can never pierce the director. After all, she another creature that exhibits zero sympathy and empathy for those around her. She only sees us as entertainment.

I glanced towards Ichinose who wore a sinister smile.

Two horrible creatures are in this room....

" Anyways...." Lumine composes herself.

" Let's take a break! And get ready for the **final** round, all right?"

" Ichinose." Once everyone left the gymnasium and my classmates returning to the classroom to rest. I stopped Ichinose by placing a hand on her shoulder.

" Hm~?" She looks to me but her pupils shifted towards my hand. Sensing a dangerous aura, I quickly retracted my hand and stepped back a bit.

" I....have a few questions..." I said, trying not to stutter. I had forgotten how suffocating the atmosphere is when we're alone.

" Follow me then." She said.

Follow...her? Where?

But I held back on questioning it. I just decided to stay silent and follow her way like I've always been doing up till now. She led us both to the empty cafeteria room and she had offered me a snack but I refused, she sighs and shrugs before gesturing for me to go take a seat and so I did. She soon followed, taking her seat opposite

to me.

" Ichinose....what is your plan?" I asked.

" My plan?"

" Yes...what you told me during the break of round 2, it doesn't add up to what's happening now. I'm sure you're pulling the strings. And....I need to know what exactly are you doing?" I said.

" Exactly as you said, Kanzaki-kun..."

" Huh?" I let out a confused sound.

Her eyes darken and she grins in amusement.

" Do you still not get it?" she asked.

" No..." I had my suspicions, my theories, but I wasn't completely sure. I need her to explain it to me in detail.

" Hm....all right then.....how about I call a certain someone to join

us?" She suddenly said.

" Huh? What do you-"

" Ayanokoji-kun! Please come out of hiding and join us at the table!" She called, sweetly.

It was silent for a moment...

Until I heard a loud sigh.

Some rustling.

And then under one of the tables where a cloth covered most of it. It suddenly opened slowly and out came Ayanokoji Kiyotaka's figure.

" What...?" Was he hiding in there the whole time?!

" You really suck at hiding, Ayanokoji-kun!" Ichinose laughs in amusement.

"..." He didn't respond.

" Please, come join us! " Ichinose patted the seat beside her.

Ayanokoji seemed to contemplate his choices (though it was hard to tell since his expression was blank) but after a few minutes of silence, he decided to comply and took the seat farthest from us while in the same table.

" What is it?" Ayanokoji asked, monotonously.

" Would you mind explaining what I did to Kanzaki-kun?" She asked.

My head snapped towards her in panic.

" Huh? Ayanokoji's in on this-?!"

But then the man in question sighed and interrupted me.

" Don't get the wrong idea, Kanzaki." He said.

"Huh?" I turned to him this time.

" I'm not cooperating with Ichinose in any context. I'm simply a

bystander in this entire situation, but I was misfortunate enough to have Ichinose suddenly telling me her plan." He said.

" Okay...." I cleared my throat. " But...what did she tell you?" I asked him.

"...." His eyes shifted towards Ichinose for a bit.

Before he suddenly pulled out his phone.

" This." He said, vaguely.

" ' This'? That's just your phone-"

" But what do we have stored in our phones, Kanzaki?"

" Well, the biggest thing would be private points-....." My eyes widened in realization.

" Exactly." Ayanokoji said before placing the phone back in his pocket. He then pulled out a biscuit and began opening it before speaking,

" Ichinose used private points to set the statements. I'm sure you've thought of it as a theory, but you didn't exactly know ' how' to do it." He said.

Ichinose....used private points?

" ' Everything within the school can be bought with private points.' That's what they told us on the first day. A detail that most of us have forgotten." He said.

" Mhm!" Ichinose hummed.

" B-But...." I turned to look at her. " How much points did it cost? Surely, it couldn't be cheap..."

" It cost me about **1,600,000** points." She said.

" 1,600,000....but how did you.....hold on...." I slammed my hands on the table.

" DID YOU USE OUR CLASS BANK?!" I said in disbelief.

She smiles at me in response.

She....She really did....

During the first month....Ichinose gathered everyone and suggested creating a class bank on such short notice. It was suspicious, but she managed to sway us with her words and then we complied.

All 40 Class B students gave her 40,000 private points...

Multiply 40,000 with 40....it equals to an exact **1,600,000** product....

" Ichinose.....what.....what exactly did you buy....be specific." I asked while slowly sitting back down.

" She bought student info and the ability to set the statements. " I hear Ayanokoji say. I turn to him in shock.

" Student history?" I asked. He nods.

" B-But that....is...a violation....other schools would've-

" But this isn't a normal school now, is it?" Ayanokoji interrupted. " This school is operated by a psychotic woman who desires nothing but entertainment from those she torments. Director Lumine enforces her rules." He said.

He's right....this isn't a normal school...

And I'm not completely surrounded by normal people....

" So....Ichinose bought everyone's information...?" I asked.

" No. She only bought the information of people she wants to destroy." Ayanokoji responded.

" Huh?"

" That's right!" Ichinose chirped. " I only bought the info for students I wish to destroy. If I were to have bought everyone's information, it would cost way more than a mere 1,600,000 points." She said.

I see.....I get it now....

She's strategically picking the people...that can affect the class leaders. And if it can affect the class leaders, then it affects the entire class because just like me, they too have faith in their leaders to lead them to victory.

" Do you get my plan now, Kanzaki-kun?" She asked me.

She's playing with their emotions. Baiting them into thinking she's losing but then suddenly pulling off this trick to shake them....to rattle them. To have them question their own choices and forcing them to hesitate which results to delaying a second that truly counts. It makes them doubt themselves even if they knew the truth.

This creature....

" Isn't it amazing how the human mind works?"

She said those words.

The statements up till now, the ones that were left untampered, were mostly statements that leaned towards the general subject. But after Ichinose set these statements, they become more detailed, and more exposure begins to rise from it. She's playing with the human mind because she's aware of how it works to a terrifying degree.

" One more question...." I spoke softly.

" Hm?" She tilts her head curiously.

" Who....Who are you targeting next?" I asked.

She didn't answer.

(Back at the gymnasium)

The final round begins....

" All right! The final round shall begin with a student from Class D so I'd like to call **Yukimura Teruhiko!** " She said.

The one with the glasses....

....

I can't think straight.

Ichinose used all our bank private points to set these statements. She went to the director without me noticing. And to think the person who knew her plan....was Ayanokoji Kiyotaka. Why would she tell the enemy of her plan? Or does she see Ayanokoji Kiyotaka as an ally? No, that's not very likely considering Ayanokoji's obvious reluctance when he sat down at the table with us to explain Ichinose's plan....

....

Ayanokoji is also a strange individual himself. He is the student who betrayed his class and eliminated all the class murderers in one round. It makes me wonder how smart he is? Is he smarter than Sakayanagi? More cunning than Ryuen? Is he....more conniving than Ichinose and the director?

Honestly....I can't tell.

The aura he gave off....was nothing.

Everything about him seemed transparent. That's how blank of a canvas he is. But I wonder how his classmates see him? Maybe they know something about him that we don't.

Perhaps that's eerie in itself. To give off such an empty vibe after pulling off a scheme that included betrayal. Why did he betray his class, anyways? He will have only earned 500,000 private points and a game protection points. Nothing more.

But....that wasn't the case in the end. He earned 500 class points for his class after choosing the traitor route....

Did he know that would be the case? Or was it unintentional...

I'll....save that thought for later. For now, I have to watch Ichinose's plan unfold.

" All right! I'll begin with the statement." Lumine announced before looking towards Yukimura.

" Truth or Lie: Yukimura's drug addict of a mother left their family when he was 7 years old."

I notice Yukimura flinch but his eyes were locked towards those of Class D. I see, Class D must be aware of the truth, so it's very likely that they can secure first place-

" HUH?! WHERE'S OUR VOTING SLIPS?!"

What? Did that come from Class D?

" O-Our voting slips are gone!" Someone cried.

" Who took it?!"

" Shit! Our pens also disappeared! What the hell!"

Huh? Their voting slips and pens are nowhere to be found?

Did....Did Ichinose do this too?!

I looked to the girl in question but she wasn't here. I looked towards the stage and there I found her submitting our vote with a sweet smile.

She must have done this....

But when? How?!

Ugh, there's no point thinking about it now! Focus, Ryuji, just focus on the damn victory that Ichinose will be handing us on a silver platter!

Who cares at this point about the other classes....

She'll do whatever she pleases...

" Everyone has submitted their votes except Class D! Hey, Class D! Hurry up!" Lumine taunts.

" D-Director! O-our voting slips went missing!" One of them reported.

" And our pens too!" Another added.

" Hmm? Is that so? How problematic! But since I want this game over and done with, you can use whatever writing material you can find in this gym. Strictly in this gym. Because if you walk outside the door, that's equivalent to a surrender." Lumine said.

Hirata PoV

" Hirata-kun what do we do?!" The girls asked in panic.

" Does anyone have paper!" Some of the boys tried to ask around.

Paper...pens....

How did this happen...why is it only getting worse for us?!

Where did we go wrong? Our plan....it was perfect, was it not? I had help from Ryuen and Sakayanagi-san to finalize it and yet Ichinose-san managed to knock us down even deeper than we previously were at round 2! Dammit!

Last round....even Ryuen and Sakayanagi weren't acting like normal. Ichinose is affecting them too.....everyone.....everyone is suffering.

Damn it.

Damn it.

Damn this game.

Damn her.

DAMN IT ALL!

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE PERFECT VICTORY!

.....

.....

" I found paper!" I hear one of the boys exclaim.

I took a deep breath to regain myself some composure. I can't break down just yet. We're losing but now I just gotta focus on

making sure we don't lose any more than this. Yes, that's the only way. That's the only small victory within our reach...

" B-But what about to write?! We got nothing!"

" We scoured the gym but there really is nothing to use!"

" What are we going to do?!"

My classmates panicked.

I walked towards the student who held the sheet of paper.

" Give me it." I held my hand out. They nodded and placed it in my hand.

I began folding it into four pieces and making sure it's neat as possible. Then I unfold it and began tearing it following the folded lines as a guide to make sure it's equal on all sides. After tearing the sheet into four equal bits of paper, I just needed something to write with....

My eyes landed on Horikita-san.

No choice...

" Horikita-san! Could you give me your compass?" I asked.

She wore a confused expression but handed me the compass wordlessly.

" Thank you..." I smiled before sliding the compass open and out came its sharp point.

" Hirata-kun? What are you planning to do with the compass?" Mii-chan asked me.

.....

.....

.....

" HIRATA WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?!"

"AHHHH!" I yelled in pain as I felt the sharp point piercing through my under wrist. I had no choice but to pierce it through. Unlike blades, I can't make a normal cut with a compass for it only

has a sharp point installed, thus, I had to resort to stabbing it and twisting.

" HIRATA-KUN STOP!"

" COME ON MAN! Y-YOU DON'T NEED TO GO THAT FA-"

" I HAVE NO CHOICE! SHUT UP ALL OF YOU!" I yelled through gritted teeth as I began to pull the compass out and dropping it on the ground. Everyone was too stunned to speak further as I began to approach the paper on the table.

Blood was seeping out from my pierced wrist.

This...This is the only way....

I used my right hand's index finger to swipe a bit of blood from my left wrist.

I then began writing the vote with my blood.

The paper was thick, so the blood managed to stay on quite nicely.

Wordlessly, I submitted it to Lumine....

" Hirata....you're one insane guy! I like that! Please show me more in the future!" She winks.

Shut up....you psycho....

I walked back towards my class, applying pressure to my wrist.

" Hirata-"

" We'll be using my blood for now...." I said to them.

" I'll be okay. This is the only way." I assured them but they still wore shocked looks.

Whatever.....

Ryuen PoV

Hirata....you're desperate, huh.

But aren't we all? I can't laugh at your effort because frankly, there is no reason to laugh anymore. Everyone in this room is desperate. Even Sakayanagi looks perturbed.

Ichinose....you're one sly bitch.

I thought you were naive with your kindness and friendship bullshit but there's something more to you. I don't know what you did nor do I want to even make up theories because at this point, you've already won. The only things the other classes can do is to lose as little points as much as possible.

" All the classes voted truth. " Lumine announces.

" Yukimura, is it a truth or is it a lie?" She asked.

" Yes..." Yukimura confirmed.

" Correct!" Lumine said.

" Class A, who will you pick?" Lumine asked again.

" Class B." Damn you Ichinose.

" Alrighty!"

The scoreboard began changing...

[Class A - 2160 cp - (+ 300) 2460 cp]

[Class B - 860 cp - (Demoted to Class C, -300) 560 cp]

[Class C - 800 cp - (Promoted to Class B, + 100) 900 cp]

[Class D - (-) 100 cp - (+ 100) 0 cp]

Tch.

" Up next, I call upon **Ryuen Kakeru** of Class C!" She said.

So it's me this time...

I glanced towards Sakayanagi and she returned my gaze. She must've understood that there's something strange going on behind the scenes of this entire game and that suspicion lands on Ichinose alone. We then broke eye contact and I made my way to the stage.

" Okay! I will now relay the statement." Lumine said.

Get it over with you trash director.

" **Truth or Lie: Ryuen comes from a poor family. He has a struggling mother and a little sister who's oblivious to it all-**"

Wait-

" He fights in the streets for some extra money whenever he gets the chance. He's lost many times but he stays strong and keeps fighting. The boy bets his entire life for his family no matter the cost "

How does she know this.

" However, one day, he overstepped his boundaries and ended up losing a fight against a pretty sadistic group of people. Ryuen was foolish at the time to believe that they only wanted money, but in fact, they wanted more. They found his address and stormed his home stealing everything of value and it was then that Ryuen's mother finally discovered her son's other life on the streets."

" SHUT IT." I glared at her.

She returned my gaze with a mocking smile.

" And contrary to what one might expect of a mother, instead of hearing out her son's reasons and showing forgiveness and solidifying familial love. She instead banished him from home. Thus, separated from his mom and sister and continued his life on the streets while sneaking in to attend school."

" YOU FUCKING BITCH-" I rushed at her full speed.

Nobody has made me more infuriated than this woman. She's pushed too many buttons including my own.

But then-

BANG!

A bullet pierced my foot.

" AAAAAHHHHHHH! FUCKKKK!" I let out an agonizing scream as I fell down immediately to the ground.

My shot foot was trembling and it hurts excruciatingly. I tried to lead it closer to my hand but it was hard to move. I've never been shot like this, damn it!

" Oh? You okay there?" I hear the director ask, I can tell she was hiding her laughter.

" FUCK YOU!" I yelled at her.

" RYUEN-SAN?!" I hear Ishizaki yell.

I looked towards everyone else and they all wore faces of shock. But none of them dared to make a move, afraid that the director might do them the same if they tried. I stayed on the floor, trying to reach for my shot foot.

" Hehehe~! I'm so glad you came rushing at me. I was just WAITING for someone strong to rush against me so I could use this gun!" She presents the gun to me as if it were show and tell. " So thank you for acting on your impulse! I love people like you!" She grinned.

" F-Fucking...B-Bitch- AHHHH!" She stepped on my foot.

" Oh? Does it really that hurt?" She cooed.

" How about YOU try getting shot." I spat with venom.

She then stomps on it-

" AHHHH! FUCK YOU! YOU FUCKING BITCH!" I yelled in more pain. Unable to move.

" HAHAAHAHAHAH!" She just laughed before lifting her foot and walking away.

" Anyways, enough fun. We should end this game as quickly as possible~ So..."

" Send in your votes guys!" She said.

F-Fuck....

No....everything will be fine....my class will get the votes right....

After all, my expressions says everything. That none of it is a lie...

" Oh! Nice! The voting have arrived!" I hear the director say.

I closed my eyes and breathed slowly to calm myself down. I hear the classes murmuring to each other but I couldn't be bothered to decipher what they were saying...

All I know...is that my class got the answer right-

" Only Class A voted truth it seems! While the rest voted lies!"

What?

No-

That can't be. All of them voted LIE?!

I tried to sit up to look at their faces.

" Ryuen! Is it a truth or is it a lie?" Lumine asked.

D-Damn it....

Why....Why did they choose lie.

How did Sakayanagi let that happen too?

What in the hell is going on?!

" ...Truth...." I said.

" Correct!"

Sakayanagi PoV

It seems...

A traitor is within our classes....

How irritating....

They only began to surface now. But the question I'm most curious about is whether or not they're operating on their own autonomy or perhaps they're siding with Ichinose. If it's the latter, then it might be easier to remedy, but if it's the former then it'll be troublesome to identify their desires if games like this keep going on.

So many mistakes are happening in this game. And a few of those mistakes belong to me, I am absolutely appalled by how far I've fallen. But I have to endure such hurdles. This is my first time feeling.....inferior.

I don't like it.

I do not wish to experience it any further.

But in a situation like this, I have to make sure I don't lose any

more class points or else it'll all be over for my class and leadership.

" Every class except A will be deducted 400 points! Also, which class will Class A select next to deduct another 300 points?" The director asked.

" Class B." As expected, Ichinose selected my class.

So I will be deducted 700 class points...

[Class A - 2460 cp - (+300) 2760 cp]

[Class B - 900 cp - (-700) 200 cp]

[Class C - 560 cp (-400) 160 cp]

[Class D - 0 cp - (-400) - (-)400]

200 class points.....

We have to endure 2 more rounds...

Without losing any more than this.

A few students from Class C went on stage to help pick Ryuen up. It was likely his lackeys since Yamada Albert was present. When he was being helped to the group, his eyes locked with mine for a second. That's when I knew he also thought of the same conclusion

as I....

These class ' traitors' needs to be disposed immediately....

Thankfully enough, I've managed to crack the pattern of these statements. The next statement will without a doubt, be a lie. I concluded such because I'm sure the director is aware that there's nothing really interesting going on in my life except....

It was Lumine herself who took over my father's school.....this school.....belongs to him.

I was not aware of the various types of atrocities that Lumine conducted in this prestigious high school. But she stained it with blood and that irks me for this is my father's hardwork and I value my father and mother above everything else besides my genius.

By joining this school and participating in its ' activities'then I can search for a weakness Lumine might have and then expose it.

That aside, I don't have many interesting things going on. And I highly doubt Lumine would try to expose the fact that she took over the school not because she's scared, but rather, because it's boring to her. That woman craves excitement over everything else and thus, she will make up a **lie** on the next statement which will belong to me.

I'm confident that I'd be selected.

" All right! I'd like to call **Sakayanagi Arisu** of Class B to please come up on stage!" Just as I expected.

I whispered to Kamuro, who was situated beside me at all times.

" I will join the stage alone. Please vote ' Lie' on the slip."I said to her sweetly, but behind my facade was a demanding officer. And she knew that.

She grunts and nods along silently. Quite a pleasant assistant, I must say.

I began to slowly walk to the stage with the assistance of my cane. I thought walking slower would evoke an irritated expression from the director but she still kept the usual smile. Either she's good at hiding it, or she has a great amount of patience and truthfully if it were the latter then that's something praiseworthy.

I finally stood on the stage, facing my schoolmates with a calm grin.

Well, then, Lumine.

State your lie-

" Truth or Lie: Sakayanagi is involved with a deal exchange between herself, Ryuen, and Hirata. The deal was to share their classmates secret in order to dominate the statement game against Ichinose Honami. Each class leader compiled their classmate's secrets and discussed it during the break before round 3."

....

" H-Huh?!"

" Is that true?!"

" WHAT THE HELL!"

Hirata PoV

No....

" H-Hirata-kun.....i-is that true?"

" Hirata....you....agreed?"

" To a deal like that?!"

My classmates looked at me in shock.

" Hirata.....why....WHY THE HELL DID YOU HIDE THIS FROM

US?!" Keisei grabbed me by the collar. I felt the stinging pain of my wrist from the sudden movement but I didn't dare voice out anything.

"I thought....it would work..." I admitted.

" WHY DID YOU NOT CONSULT IT WITH THE CLASS! AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO WORK TOGETHER LIKE YOU SAID? " Keisei countered.

"...If you guys knew then all of you would disagree..." I said.

For a moment, everyone seemed to agree with that. So they didn't say anything until Kushida-san broke the silence.

" But it would've helped, Hirata-kun....if you gave it a shot then I'm that at the very least we'd hear you out and consider it..." She said.

She was right. however, we didn't have time. It was much easier to hide it this way but now it's backfiring on me.

" Seriously Hirata.....you're even worse than Ayanokoji...." Miyamoto said.

"I can't disagree with that...." Hondo said.

"..." The girls stayed silent.

Damn it...

It seems....this....was the worst outcome....

Not only that.....but we also have another traitor in our class....

We can't win...

Ryuen PoV

" Ryuen....did you...really?" These annoying bastards asked me.

" Yeah. What? You're gonna get mad?" I acted defensively.

They immediately backed off.

Tch.

A traitor within our class....when I find that bastard....whoever they are....I'm going to make them regret it.

Sakayanagi PoV

" Class B has submitted their answer first!" I hear Lumine say.

My class submitted first?

I felt a small sense of relief wash over me. There's only one person in my class that knows about the deal and that would be Kamuro Masumi. While the deal was taking place, I had her on stand-by outside to ward off any passerbys from suddenly entering the room. Indeed a truly loyal girl, despite the fact I had to put a leash on her for the sake of her loyalty to me.

So it's obvious that she'll write truth since she was present at the time. I can deal with my classmates later.

But....why do I feel something is amiss....regarding Kamuro?

" All votes have arrived! "

Let's see....

" Everyone but Class D voted truth." She said.

" Excuse me?" I interjected.

" Hm?" This dreadful woman turns to me with a curious look.

" Did you say everyone but class B....MY class....voted truth?" I asked.

She chuckles.

" Yep~"

What?

No....but....

Kamuro....wrote lie?

Did she take my words literally? No, she's not that dumb. She clearly knows that putting down Lie is wrong and yet she still-

I Internally began to realize something.

Could it be....

I looked towards Kamuro and locked gazes with her. She returned it and stared back at me.

*Is Kamuro-san.....the **traitor**?*

" Sakayanagi! is it a **truth** or is it a **lie**!" Lumine asked enthusiastically.

No. Why.

Is Kamuro-san working with Ichinose? Behind my back? How? When?

I made sure Kamuro was by my side 24/7 ever since I got her. The only time we weren't together was when we had to return to our respective rooms in the dormitory. Sure, Ichinose could've interacted with her by then but Kamuro would've ignored her. She was never the type to openly socialize especially with girls like Ichinose.

Unless....

Unless she couldn't leave her post.....

" Sakayanagi?" I hear someone call me but I drowned out their voice.

Then does that mean....Ichinose interacted with her OUTSIDE of the room when Ryuen, Hirata, and I were planning? Not only that, it could also explain how Ichinose's class guessed truth as if they knew.

As if **she** knew.

....

Kamuro-san knew the answer....and yet she blatantly ignored it and wrote the wrong one....

She really is...the traitor....

" Sa-ka-ya-na-gi~" I hear the director taunt me.

I.....lost...

" Truth..." I muttered.

Kamuro Masumi....you will pay for this along with Ichinose Honami....

Kanzaki PoV

The class leaders....

All of them.....lost....

The scoreboard began changing....

[Class A - 2760 cp - (+ 300) 3060 cp]

[Class B - 200 cp - (Demoted to Class D, -400) -200]

[Class C - 160 cp - (Promoted to Class B, + 100) 260 cp]

[Class D - 0 cp - (Promoted to Class C, + 100) 100 cp]

...The results...

I have a feeling it doesn't stop here.

" Kanzaki-kun." Ichinose called me. I looked to her and slowly walked towards her since she was beckoning me to come over.

" What is it?" I asked. What else is she scheming?

"Vote lie and submit last." Was all she said to me. And before I could ask 'why', Lumine spoke.

"All right! Let's finally end this game, shall we? The last student for the final round....a student from Class....I'd like to select...." Her eyes shifted towards our class.

"Ichinose Honami! Get on stage!" She called.

I saw a grin forming on Ichinose's lips. She gave me one last look, reminding me of her words, before going up to the stage with our class expressing for whatever 'bad' statement Ichinose Honami might have, but also possessed doubts that any bad statement will apply to this.....'angel'.

She stood on stage, facing all of us.

The atmosphere felt tense.

And I knew why.

All the class leaders glared at her with anger and bitterness. All of them exhibited the same aura towards one person, I'm sure everyone feels it too.

Ichinose only put on her innocent smile, as if mocking them which was likely the intention.

" All right....the final statement..." Lumine clears her throat before speaking.

Ichinose told me to put lie.

But I'm curious to know the statement she'll be given.

I wonder....what it'll be-

" Truth or Lie: Ichinose Honami has murdered 10 people which included her previous friends and family members."

" What?" My classmates gasped. Their faces turned white at the thought of it....being true....

Ichinose kept her smile. Seemingly unaffected.

I see now....

She inserted this statement at the last round because it wraps up all the manipulation, the mind games, the emotional fiddling, she's been causing towards the class leaders. By inserting an unbelievable statement like this....at a time like this.....it'll destroy them. It'll bait them into writing down truth.

If this statement were relayed any earlier, then it'd be likely for all the classes to vote " Lie". And thus, everyone wins. But putting down " lie" would seem like a bait in itself due to the various crazy statements that have been said before, accompanied with the class leaders' lingering suspicions on Ichinose's true face.

Everyone...

Is dancing in the palm of her hand.

Hirata PoV

She murdered.....10 people?

.....

" T-that's crazy....it's a lie." Miyamoto said.

" Y-yeah, there's no way someone as kind as Ichinose-san.....would commit any sort of murder..." Kushida said.

"...It sounds unbelievable." Horikita agreed.

" THEN LET'S VOTE LIE!" Sudo yelled with finality.

Lie..?

Yes, that seems the most likely answer....but....what if...

" Wait." I told them.

" Huh? What is it?" The boys said, sounding annoyed. My relationship with the class is bad right now due to my deal being exposed.....but right now....they have nobody to turn to except me. In this game at least.

" It's a bait." I told them.

It has to be.

" Huh? What are you-" Keisei tried to ask further but I ignored him and began writing down on the last piece of paper with my blood.

I won't lose any more than this....

Ryuen PoV

Could it be a bait?

Ichinose.....I've concluded that you are an impressive actress. An even more annoying enemy than I had initially thought. I thought I'd have to worry most about Ayanokoji but it seems like you're either equal to his level or the nearest to him.

" It's a bait." I told Ishizaki.

" Huh? " He looked at me confused. He was just about to write lie on the voting slip.

" It's a bait. Put truth." I ordered.

" A-Alright...."

Sakayanagi PoV

" Tch, let go of me Hashimoto!" I hear Kamuro complain.

" Sorry, but princess suspects you to be the traitor." Hashimoto shrugs, " I'm only following her desires."

" Kito! Do you think it's me too?" Kamuro asked.

The student with long black hair and a very mature face simply grunted in response.

" Oh come on!" Kamuro replied.

I looked towards her. " There is no doubt that you are the traitor, Kamuro-san." I said.

" I won't be tricked by Ichinose any more than this. It stains the value I hold for myself." I said.

" Sakayanagi...." She growls. " you're being an **idiot** right now! You're literally getting tricked by Ichinose at this very moment!" She said.

'Idiot' ?

Did she really call me that just now?

" W-Wait, princess, calm down!" Hashimoto tried to say but-

STOMP!

I stomped my cane on her foot.

" AHHHHH!" Kamuro screamed in pain.

" Repeat that, Kamuro-san." I twisted the cane, eliciting more screeches out of her , " **I dare you.**" I said.

She grit her teeth.

She didn't say anymore, but she kept flinching.

" Hmph." I lifted my cane off her foot and she released a relieved breath.

" Don't utter such disgusting words with my name every again, Kamuro-san. Or next time I won't be so merciful to your poor little foot." I warned her.

How unusual of me. Losing my composure like this, letting my inner anger show, especially towards my...." allies".

It's so unlike me.

But seeing the way her face scrunched in pain, how her eyes developed a sense of remorse for her mistakes, and fortified obedience. It felt....quite pleasant.

Is that Sadism? The feeling I felt?

I sighed.

No, I mustn't waste such valuable time on a passing thought. I must determine the answer, the correct answer, to this statement. Is it a truth or is it a lie? With the pattern Ichinose has left for the past turns and her current expression...

It suggests that it's a bait.

She's trying to bait others into writing down truth.

Fufu.....so this was the conclusion you wanted, huh.

I apologize, Ichinose-san....but you're not going to achieve the ending you wanted-

" All right! All the classes have sent in their votes!"

H-Huh?!

But...I didn't....

I quickly turn around to check if Kamuro was still in the hold of Hashimoto and Kito.

" I....told you...." She grumbled.

She....isn't the traitor?!

But then...last round....I was the one who instructed her....so how did we-

Unless....someone else got to the votings before she did...

No....

NO!

Ayanokoji PoV

Seems like the moment of truth has arrived.

The last student.

The last round.

" All the classes but Class A have submitted truth!" The director announces.

Her mind games. Her manipulation. It ends here.

" Ichinose Honami. Is the statement a **truth** or a **lie**?" She looked towards Ichinose.

" It's a lie." She said.

" Huh?" Ryuen and Hirata looked visibly suprised while Sakayanagi seemed lost and agitated. She was looking for someone. Most likely the traitor.

" Correct! And this wraps up the second game! Congratulations my students!"

Lumine said before clapping.

" And Class A, who will you pick?" Lumine asked, referring to the steal advantage.

" Class C, please." Ichinose said.

I stared at her.

She stared right back.

A ghost of a grin was almost visible on her face.

She decided to use the last steal advantage on my class....

It seems....she truly is asking for **war**.

Fine then, Ichinose Honami.

I value freedom for myself, more than anything else.

But if you remain an obstacle in my path....

A detriment to my desire.....

A threat to my peace....

*Then I have no choice but to **erase** you from the equation.*

This is not a threat.

Nor is it a promise...

The moment you initiated this plan...

*It formed a **covenant** between us.*

I looked towards the final results on the scoreboard....

[Class A - 3060 cp - (+ 300) 3360 cp]

[Class B - 260 cp - (-400) -140 cp]

[Class C - 100 cp - (-700) -600 cp]

[Class D - -200 cp - (-400) -600 cp]

Final Results!

Class A (Ichinose) = 3360 cp

Class B (Ryuen) = -140 cp

Class C (Hirata) = -600 cp

Class D (Sakayanagi) = -600 cp

Everyone was too depressed to speak.

Except for Class A. They let out their sounds of celebration and expressed their relief.

...

They must be happy that their leader never committed a crime such as murder. But...

Her eyes, the eyes she displayed to me. It tells a different story.

Perhaps the only ' lie ' in that statement is the number of people she's killed.

" Hm." I hummed to myself before releasing a sigh as I made my way to the exit of the gymnasium.

Congratulations, Ichinose...you truly...

Kanzaki PoV

She...really....

Ryuen PoV

That...bitch...

Sakayanagi PoV

I can't believe she achieved what she wanted...

She really achieved...

Ichinose PoV

Perfect victory~

CHAPTER END!

I finished it...

Finally.....

10k words wasn't the plan here but....

It felt too awkward to cut it into two episodes since the opportunity kept feeling off ig?

Well! I hope you enjoyed this long ass episode! The first arc is finally finished.

Next episode won't be long. It might come out tomorrow since it's short but it's paired with an announcement regarding this fic.

but for now I gtg!

KawaiiLumine, out~

Episode 15: He who assumes the role....

Ayanokoji PoV

What a horrible loss for my class. Truly.

....

But this game has given me more information than I expected. Revealing Horikita and Kushida's past, Hirata's tyrant-like switch, Karuizawa's fragile history and others, Ichinose's true nature, and the disorganized situation of my classmates.

This game. It provided me what I wanted.

Truth be told, there was never really a traitor in Class D. I simply instructed a certain student to sabotage in the final round.

In Ryuen's class and Sakayanagi's class, however, probably has actual traitors. But it doesn't matter to me at the moment. What matters is the fact that my opportunity has arrived, at this very

moment, my class is at their lowest point.

Trust shattered.

Friendships questioned.

Arguments ensue...

Ichinose dismantled them wonderfully in my favor. It is now my turn to mold them into people I will **lead** for my own personal benefit. As long as I can put on a show for the director, my freedom will be secured but there's a few hurdles in the way and future hurdles I will no doubt encounter. I wonder how much I'll struggle when they arrive.

Well, Ichinose has become the first actual hurdle. We are most likely to fight head on in a game of wits once the next opportunity arrives, which is likely the third game, whatever it may be.

I don't plan to lose to her.

For the first time in my life, I've been given a more motivating cause to win.

A better reason on why I should expend more effort than what is necessary...

....

*Perhaps it's also because I'm starting to find this quite **fun**.*

The absolute absurdity of these games and the director who conducts it...

The mystery behind certain people....

Back then, in the White Room, everything felt expected. I can't remember the last time I felt proud of an achievement, nor feel any uncertainty in everything I do. Ever since a few certain student that I got along with had passed away due to my own actions, I felt nothing. I had no drive nor proper ambition.

But now, I'm surrounded by chaos and people whose hearts are stained by their own individual history. This environment provides me a sense of uncertainty within my being, and so I have all the more reason to eliminate those I deem ' threats' in order to protect myself. But what comes with that, is excitement. I've yet to identify such thoughts and feelings as a ' good' or ' bad' thing.

I slid the classroom door open. And it seems like Chabashira-sensei was still tasked to officially dismiss them for the day.

" Ayanokoji. Where were you? I was just about to dismiss the class." My sensei told me in a stern manner.

My eyes surveyed everyone's expressions. As expected, they're magma waiting to break through the crack of the volcano. All it'll take is a mere shake and it will all spill....

" Why so gloomy everyone?" I spoke loudly, grabbing everyone's attention.

I made my way to the teacher's podium.

" Ayanokoji? What are you-" Sensei looked about ready to scold but before she could, I quickly interrupted her.

" Sensei, I'd like to request that you stay silent and allow for me the chance to educate these **fools**." I intended to ask politely, but I sounded more commanding than polite.

"...." She sighs, it seems she understands. She steps to the side and allows me to stand in front of all of them.

And so, began their complaints.

" Ayanokoji? What the hell do you think you're doing?"

" Have you no shame talking to a teacher like that!"

" An outcast like you has no right to-"

" Shut up." I nonchalantly said.

" Huh?" They seemed taken aback. I decided to continue.

" Shouldn't I be asking you these questions? What the hell were you all doing? Have you all no shame for losing this much? Do any of you have the rights to complain to the guy who brought you 500 class points from the first game?" I said to them, coldly.

All of them immediately went silent.

Well, I didn't really expect to win 500 class points since that wasn't part of my intentions, but it's good leverage to use at this very moment, especially with the direction I've chosen.

" This is bullshit...." I hear someone mutter.

" I'm sorry, did someone say something? If someone did, then please do repeat it." I decided to make my mark.

A loud screech came from the back of the room. My eyes wander towards the student and it was Sudo Ken of all people.

" YOU CAN'T TELL US WHAT TO DO! YOU MAY HAVE BROUGHT US 500 CLASS POINTS BUT YOU DON'T TELL US NOTHING! HOW DO YOU EXPECT US TO TRUST YOU AGAIN, HUH?!" He marched towards me with a pissed off expression.

Everyone in the room was silent. Some look nervous, maybe because they think another fight will break out. I don't blame them for thinking so because depending on my choice of response, it can lead to a more peaceful conclusion or a tiresome scuffle.

" Aren't we your classmates dude?! We lost two people, we're breaking apart over here and you're just watching from the goddamn sidelines! If you wanna fucking help then at least TELL US!" He made exaggerating gestures.

Sorry, Sudo.

But the truth is, I never had any plans to help you or any of our classmates. Gaining class points was but a mere byproduct of my own desires, which had nothing to do with the class.

However, as much as I want to correct your little misunderstanding with my intentions. I'm not dumb enough to aggravate you any further since that is not my intention or method unless necessary.

I released a sigh.

" Perhaps you're right." I feigned resignation.

" Huh?"

I looked him in the eye.

" I should've told everyone. But I was naturally bad at communicating with others my age since...." This is it. It's time to place down my trap.

I looked to the ground.

" It may not justify much of my actions but.....I was always bad at socializing with other people. My father didn't let me go out often nor did he let me get to know others my age. And since I felt ' cut off ' from reality, I never developed any type of personality. My emotions are sometimes there....sometimes spontaneous and....." I clenched my fist.

" It led to a scuffle between us. " I didn't dare mention my obvious victory. It was an unnecessary reminder for Sudo.

" I-...uh...." Sudo stuttered. He didn't expect me to answer like this.

Everyone looked at me wide-eyed.

" I'm sorry, Sudo." I bowed my head slightly. " It was inexcusable for me to not only betray the class, but also in hurting a classmate. It was a fight I could've avoided if I had just talked back then, but I chose not to for my own selfish reasons."

" Ayanokoji-kun...." I hear the girls say my name, as if feeling empathy.

This was my method in gaining their trust back. By acting like a lone wolf, a passive-aggressive person, in their eyes. then I will have placed a cold image in their minds.

The human mind is interesting...

The moment they see a usually sincere person like Hirata suddenly acting the complete opposite, the people around him will discard him and replace the positive image with a negative one. (Ultimately, it'd be hard for Hirata to regain their trust but at the same time, it might not be out of reach since he excels in social interaction better than me).

Now why don't we try to flip the coin?

If an insincere person were to act sincere, then the people around them will be taken aback. Seeing a cold image melt into a warm one, seeing an arrogant person being vulnerable, it only heightens a human being's empathy for that person. This is the effect I was aiming for, the moment I stepped in the classroom.

By acting cruel....and then stripping myself off of that image...

" Er...well....I guess...it's okay, dude." I hear Sudo awkwardly say.

I stopped bowing my head and looked towards Sudo.

" It's not okay." I led him on, " It's not the person I wanted to be." I looked towards everyone else,

" From the very beginning, I just wanted to make friends....and to enjoy this school life. But it was hard for me to chase that desire or express myself in any way. That's why," I looked towards the gyaru girls like Karuizawa and her friends.

" I don't blame you girls for calling me a gloomy person. That was

my own doing." I said.

" H-huh. w-wait," Karuizawa stood up, wearing an apologetic look,

" I.....I didn't realize...you felt that way. So I'm sorry as well. No! I should be the one more sorry than you, right?" She asked.

" That's-" I wanted to leave it up to her own interpretation but another one of her friends quickly stood up, looking guilty as well.

" I'm sorry too, Ayanokoji-kun.....I know a lot about misunderstandings, and I can definitely relate....to having rumors about yourself." She lets out a small laugh, but it wasn't a mocking one, rather it was intended to cool herself before speaking any further.

" And...it was unfair of me to do the same to you. I'm really sorry." She bows her head.

Mori Nene was her name, if I'm not wrong.

" Ayanokoji-kun, " Kushida also stood up, wearing a look of remorse. But in reality, there was no need to but I've come to accept the person Kushida is.

" I'm sorry....I should've known you felt that way....since we talk often. Please forgive me!" She bows.

Unnecessary for you to do, Kushida....

Is what I would think if my intentions were truly pure. But they're not. So I'm rather thankful for your assistance this time around, despite being unknown to the circumstances that led to this decision.

" It's okay. Really." I said in the lightest tone I could possibly produce, " Besides, I'm the one who's consistently inconvenienced all of you. " I said to garner even more empathy.

" So we're just going to forgive him like that?" Ijuin muttered. The guy who was verbally attacked by Hasebe.

" No, I'm not asking for your forgiveness. I genuinely just want to apologize to this class, of whom, I selfishly wronged." I said.

" Ah....well, I'm still highly apprehensive of you....but if you're actually sorry then it'd be unfair for me not to forgive you and move on." Keisei said.

All of the girls already expressed their forgiveness upon me, but the boys still look skeptical but that was to be expected. That's why I have another card up my sleeve to secure everything once and for

all.

" If all of you are willing to forgive me, then please do the same for Hirata." I said, not sounding too commanding, rather I sound like I'm making a humble request.

" But...Hirata, he made a deal with-"

" I know. It was a shocking discovery but if you're going to forgive me then please forgive him too. He only did what he thought was best for the class, unlike I, who did what's best for myself." I said.

" Ayanokoji-kun....it's not really an issue...." I hear the man himself speaking. I look towards one of the front row seats to see Hirata wearing a small pained smile. My eyes lower towards his left wrist, where there was currently a plaster stuck on it to prevent more bleeding.

It made me wonder how far you'd truly go...

But what compels you to go through such lengths? It couldn't be just because you care about everyone here. No, there must have been a motivation provided in the past for you to consider doing the above and beyond for these people.

" No it is, Hirata. You deserve to regain the respect and trust the class once had. After all, you were the only one that they depended on." I butter him up with such words.

" Still." Hondo spoke up, " We can't let Hirata just lead our class again." He scoffs.

" I agree. I'm fine with forgiving him, but if he's not willing to share his plans to the class especially when it puts our personal history at risk, then he's not fit to be leader." Keisei said while crossing his arms. He spoke with no animosity, only the logical thought.

" Hey...." Karuizawa spoke softly, " Hirata-kun is not that bad. Besides, who else are we going to depend on? You?" She asked Keisei.

" What? N-No...I'm not good with that...." Keisei muttered.

Everyone wore indecisive looks.

" What about Kushida-san?" Onodera suggested.

The boys perk up at that.

" We'll follow her command with honor and absolute obedience." They spoke like peasants.

" H-Huh?! " Kushida exclaimed, looking completely flustered.

" Not to rain on your parade, but I don't think Kikyo will be good with that." Horikita spoke.

" Kikyo? Since when did you two get so close..." One of the girls inquired.

Kushida then quickly began telling everyone the history between her and Horikita. Stuff about how they were previously close until they became distant but then they reestablished their friendship during the last game. Everyone seemed to nod along either looking interested or bored but they seemed accepting.

" Ohhh..." Most of them said.

" Yeah! And um, that's why maybe Suzune-chan could lead us if you're still untrusting of Hirata-kun." Kushida suggests.

" Huh? Kikyo, I'm not-" Suzune looked against it but Hirata also spoke up.

" I'm not against anyone becoming leader. I don't think I'm fit for the role anymore, and if my input means anything to you all, then I'd like to elect someone else that I know who can lead us to victory again." Hirata said, raising his right hand.

Everyone looked towards him.

" Who?" They all asked.

He forms an index finger and then.....

Points to me.

" I'd like to elect Ayanokoji Kiyotaka-kun as the leader for Class D." He said.

" Ayanokoji...?" Everyone sounded unsure.

" I agree with that." Horikita quickly said, her eyes gazing towards mine. Her words grabbed everyone's attention but nothing's been secured just yet. Still, she did a good job in following up.

As expected of my personal class traitor.

" Hmm....I think I agree too! " Kushida says, " Ayanokoji-kun managed to reveal all the class murderers in one round....isn't that amazing? And I have no doubts that he might be more intelligent than we assume." She said, sounding supportive.

" Him? Smart?"

" Didn't he score average...?"

" He never struck me as the studious one..."

The students whispered, contemplating and weighing their own personal opinion of me.

" Actually," I spoke loudly, silencing their whispers and grabbing their attention again.

" I wanted to assume the leader role for now. " I said and they gasped. I continued,

" Think of this as an extension of my apology, and my own

willingness to change my ways and cooperate with you all. " I said.

" Huh? But are you sure you could-" Keisei was about question, but I interrupted him,

" Kushida is correct. I'm a lot more intelligent than you may all think." I admitted.

I had to commit to this.

No going back.

No more hiding.

" And to prove it, I'll tell you everything I did during the first game and explain how I discovered all the murderers." I said.

Except....I'm going to leave out the tasks I had to do.

It's unnecessary for them to know about that....

Including my encounter with the director....

" S-Seriously...?"

" So that's how you did it..."

" Ayanokoji-kun...is amazing...."

" still....how deceitful..."

" So that's why they say to never judge the book by its cover huh...."

They uttered praises, amazement, and words of shock after finally being shown the light of my actions in which I had hidden in the dark for quite a while.

"I'm not against it. Let's have him be leader!" Sudo suprisingly spoke.

"Huh? Sudo? You too? Isn't he-"

" What's done is done and if he's going to make up for it by leading us to victory then I don't give a damn how he does it! As long he gets it done!" He faces me again, giving me a warning look, " As long as he tells us what he did. As long as he improves communication from his end. Then I have no complaints."

" As long as we win, right, everyone?" Kushida also said.

"..... Right, if that's the case, then I'll also offer support for Ayanokoji to become our leader." Keisei said after a while.

" Sounds like a plan, I must say." Matsushita expressed her side of the spectrum.

" ..." The boys made grunt noises, still sounding unsure.

" Boys?" Kushida looked towards the reluctant males.

" Agh....fine!" Miyamoto said.

" Whatever." Hondo said.

" Let's give it a shot then..." Okitani shrugs.

" Thank you!" Kushida was grateful.

" Well, if Ayanokoj-kun is the only way to win...then..."
Karuizawa trailed off as she gazes at me.

" It doesn't sound bad." She said.

Soon, the other girls and boys bandwagoned along.

" Thank you. I'll make sure not to disappoint." I bowed my head slightly.

In all honesty, there's a reason why I'm initially hesitant on leading others.

It has no correlation to my peaceful desire or solitude.

Rather,

It's because the old me used to do the same....

The old me that went too far....

I came to this school to discover a new 'me'. A 'me' I could look back on fondly once my end is near. A 'me' that has friends, that has true allies, true people the new 'me' would never give up.

But right now, what matters most, is my own benefit. I have to play these games until my three years are up and then I'll be set free. I will experience true freedom. That is, if the director stays true to her word by then.

I will prepare contingency plans in the case she doesn't...

Ichinose PoV

I ran through the merciless rain.

I ran away from home.

" Why did I do It? Why did I do it? Why did I do it?" I asked myself over and over as I kept running further and further away from home.

My clothes were stained with their blood.

My hands were stained with their blood.

My hearing was filled with their infinite screams.

My heart was tainted.

I....

I....

Before I could finish the thought, I took one wrong step and tripped on the wet concrete. There were no people around, but there were passing cars although I doubt they cared to see my situation.

After all, if they knew.....if I tell them....then they'll abandon me.

Because...I....

" Why did I do it.....Why did I kill them...." I cried to myself.

My mother....my sister...

The two most important people in the world to me.....I.....I killed them.

This dark pit in my stomach, it's an abyss, an abyss forever expanding. I look towards my hand, the rain has yet to wash away the blood. But why should it? Why should it wash away the sins of a murderer like me?

No....I deserve this...

I'll be cursed for the rest of my life.

It's unforgivable....unforgettable...

And yet.....I want to be set free from this...

I don't like this feeling...

I want to return home....but what is ' home' if I killed the people THAT MADE IT A HOME!

" WAAAAAHHHHH! MAMA! I'M SORRY! SISTER, I'M SO SORRY!" I screamed, uncaring for those who hear me. but maybe either way, they couldn't because my echoes were overwhelmed by the sound of rain.

Why did I run...

I should....I should....

Kill myself-

" H-Huh...?" Suddenly, I was no longer getting hit by the rain.

" Well, Well~ What's a child like you doing here all alone on the streets? In the middle of the night?" A woman's voice said.

In my vision, I saw boots. My eyes slowly trailed upwards to see a blonde woman with short hair, a big coat covering her...petite form. My eyes stopped at her golden orbs which felt reminiscent of the stars.

" Are you okay? Why are you covered with blood?" She asked, gently.

" Who.....Who are you?" I asked.

" I am Lumine." She introduced, " What is your name?" She asked.

I wanted to run away from this person. Something tells me that she isn't someone I should be near to.

And so, I quickly got up on my feet and ran the other direction, hoping to leave that strange woman behind. Her tone sounded warm and inviting, but this gut feeling is screaming at me to not fall for it.

" Haah...Haah...." I waited by the alley. There was cover to protect me from the rain and it seemed safe to hide in for the moment.

It was dark though...so it felt scary.

But being near that woman felt....odd...

" I....I need to figure something out...." I said to myself.

But suddenly, I felt a feminine hand land on my shoulder, suddenly pulling me deeper into the ally until my back made contact with their body.

" Figure what out~?" It was her.

I froze.

H-How?! How did she find me?!

She couldn't have ran after me...I made sure of it!

But why is she-

I then felt a sharp metal hovering close to my neck.

I-is....Is that a knife?!

" I was suprised when you ran away.....it's almost as if you knew that staying close would get you in trouble~" Her sweet voice....it contradicted her current actions.

How could a sweet-sounding woman.....hold a knife against a child?

Does she not see me as one?

I'm only 10...but....

I also...killed my mother and sister....

No.....it makes sense....

Maybe....Maybe this woman is a shinigami? A creature of death? A shinigami that knows of my sin and comes to punish me for it....

" You seem so accepting of the situation now....where's that fear gone to? "I hear her ask.

Do I have a right to be afraid?

After what I'd done?

" M-Miss...?"

" Hm~?"

I deserve death.

" Please...k-kill me." I requested.

The woman didn't respond but I closed my eyes and mentally ready myself to face pain and death. I don't care if she kills me

quick or slowly, either way, I deserve to suffer and be punished with death.

" Very well then..." She finally said.

I braced myself.

a second has passed...

two seconds have passed....

three seconds have passed....

And before I realized it, a minute has already passed and the pain was yet to happen. I stubbornly kept my eyes closed. Another minute has passed and once again, nothing happened.

I dared to open my eyes.

" Miss...?" I turn my head a bit to see the woman standing behind me, looking down on me a scrutinizing gaze. It was silent, she hadn't said anything.

I was confused.

Why didn't she kill me?

Should I tell her of my sin?

Will that give her a reason to end my existence here and now...?

" I...." I began to speak.

" I killed.....my mother and sister...." I said to her. " I destroyed....the two people that made me feel like home...." my voice cracked.

" I...." I looked down to the ground, the excess water dripping down from my hair strands and hitting the floor.

" I...deserve death....."

" Please...kill me....miss...." I pleaded.

" Hmmm.....nah." I hear the woman sigh.

" Killing a little girl like you? How boring." She said in a disappointed tone.

" Huh?" I look up to her. " Why? WHY WON'T YOU KILL ME?!" I asked aggressively.

She grins.

" Because It'd be a waste to kill someone in whom I'm feeling a certain kinship with." She said.

That was 5 years ago....

I will never forget that day due to many reasons...but the reasons that matter the most the day...

Was the fact that I had killed two of my important people.

And in the same evening, I had met another woman who became another important person in my life as of now.

Ever since then, my personality became twisted and I had begun to accept my sin. But it didn't stop there, because soon after, Lumine had taught me to revel in it. Revel in blood. Revel in **murder**.

The old Ichinose Honami is no longer here....

Every bit of my childlike innocence has been stripped away and thrown into the deepest pits of my burning memory. I am no longer the person I was before that day.

And I do not plan to return to it.

"The look on their faces were amusing, Honami." Mistress said.

"I'm glad you enjoyed the show, mistress." I smiled.

Her golden eyes turn to look at me and then back to her papers.

" Though, things are going to be quite difficult now. That's my prediction." She said.

" Why?" I asked curiously.

The only person who poses a challenge to me is Ayanokoji-kun of Class D. I don't know anything about him despite wanting to use my points to reveal his information but.....that would be a huge **spoiler** for my fun.

" Well~" She props up her elbows on the table and rests her chin on her hands.

" I can't tell you why. But it's a guarantee! " She said, cheerfully.

Anything related to the school and its future. Mistress Lumine has always been vague to me about it.

Well, there are only two things that matter to me.

Her health.

And my fun.

" Mistress, how have you been feeling? Are the medications still

working?" I asked, taking a seat.

" Mhm~ It's doing fine." She said.

I felt a wave of relief rush over me. It's important to me that Mistress is healthy.

" I'm glad..." I expressed it out loud.

" You're always so caring, Honami. Especially for someone as twisted as I am." She said.

" That's because Mistress is the only person I have left....if...Mistress dies...." I trailed off.

If mistress dies....I would lose any reason to live again.....and maybe this time....I'd actually kill myself.

" Geez, don't be so gloomy!" I felt her hands patting each of my shoulders.

" I won't die. I'm going to keep fighting. I will see through the end with my desires." She said,

" After all, I speak no lie~" She singsonged.

" Of course, mistress." I perked up with a genuine smile.

" I know that you never lie!"

Perhaps I'm wrong.

Perhaps that childish side of me has yet to truly disappear....because when I'm with her....

I feel like the old ' me' again.

Lumine PoV

" I'll be going now, Mistress." Honami waved me goodbye.

" Bye bye!" I waved back.

She opened the door and left.

I released a sigh once I made sure she was gone.

"..." My smile drops.

I don't have much time, do I?

I pressed a hand to the spot under where my ribcage should be.

"Haah...such a pity." I chuckled to myself before returning to my desk.

"Well....I should send a message to Kazumi regarding the matter she wants me to clear immediately...." I muttered to myself before I began to type my update.

'Ayanokoji Kiyotaka and Ichinose Honami....' I typed.

Ayanokoji PoV

A few days have passed since the day I was elected.

The classroom was silent during classes but felt lively during free time. Others began to talk to me a bit more to ask my input on certain ideas for hypothetical games we might endure.

Though, I convinced them to not think about it too much until the next game is officially announced. Who knows what the director might come up with.

But one thing's for sure.

I'll make sure we win.

" Good morning, students." Chabashira sensei greeted us.

" There are a few announcements the director wants the teachers to relay to their respective classrooms." She said.

I looked towards sensei, curious of what they may be.

Perhaps it's about the third game?

" For the first major announcement, the next game will take place 3 months from now." She said

" 3 months? That's...so much time..." Everyone said.

Three months, huh....

" For 3 months, normal classes will take place. And during those three months you are to prepare for the midterm exams." She said.

" WHAT? EXAMS ARE STILL A THING AFTER EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH?!" The boys groaned in annoyance.

Ignoring them, Chabashira-sensei continued,

" The class with the highest average score will be rewarded with 300 class points." She said.

" 300 class points..."

" That'll cut down our negative 600 to half....."

" Shit....we need that..."

Everyone seemed determined yet uneasy. After all, intelligence and academic ability-wise, Class D was contained the worst of the bunch with a only exceptional people that are adequate at both. Still, those few exceptional students won't be able to pull through if their classmates aren't just as prepared.

This could be a good chance to repair their bonds.

" Furthermore, moving onto the last announcement...." Chabashira sensei said before her eyes widened at the paper before relaxing again into her normal gaze.

Hm? I wonder what got her suprised-

" Ayanokoji Kiyotaka of Class D is selected to partake in the temporary first years survey program."

" Huh? Survey program?" Everyone questioned.

What is it exactly-

" Ayanokoji Kiyotaka is set to travel to London, England. Along with another student, Ichinose Honami of Class A."

Huh?

" ENGLAND?!"

(The day of departure....)

" Hello, Ayanokoji-kun." Ichinose greeted me as she dropped her bags to the ground.

We were both outside, waiting for our shared private transport to arrive in our school.

" Hello, Ichinose." I returned her greeting in kind.

I was unexpectedly roped into another situation. A ' survey' program situated in Europe? To be more precis, London, England?

Why exactly are we supposed to be there anyways. I had a ton of other questions as well, but I should stay patient.

" I'm so excited to go to England!" Ichinose said in a chipper tone.

" Is that your fake mask uttering those words? Or are they genuine." I blandly said.

" Hehe~ Maybe both?" She suggests playfully.

" Hm..." was my response.

" Hey, Ayanokoji-kun. I have a question." She asked.

" Am I allowed to ignore it?" I said.

" Well, you're free to! But allow me to ask anyways, " She tilts her head at me.

" Have you ever travelled international before?" She asked.

I contemplated a bit on whether or not I should answer or continue ignoring her. But maybe talking with her will provide further insight on the type of person she is.

After all, she proclaims herself to be my enemy.

And she's proven enough to have me deem her as me ' enemy'.

" I have." I told her.

" Really? Where?"

" I've been to the US." I admitted.

" You've been to america.....amazing!" She looked excited, " How was it? Was the trip fun?"

" Not really. My father was only there for business and I was usually told to stay in the hotel room unless called upon. So I didn't get to see much." I said.

" Oh..." She frowns a bit, " That's a bit sad..."

" Not really. I got over it. Besides, maybe things will be different in England." I shrug.

" Yeah! If they allow us to have some free time to experience the city of London, then let's partner up, all right?" She nods spontaneously.

" Sure, why not." I agreed.

A few minutes later, a black Honda Civic appeared in our view. It parked right in front of us both.

The driver's seat door opened and out came a girl who seemed to close our age. She had silver colored hair that matched with her silver colored eyes.

She looks to us with a cool smile.

" Yo! I'm Kazumi Shoko, pleasure to meet you."

" Kazumi-san?" Ichinose gasped.

" Ichinose. Nice to see you again- WHOAH!" The grey haired girl was suddenly wrapped in a hug by an excited Ichinose.

" It's been so long! " She said.

" Ahaha! It really has, huh? P-Please let go though. You're gonna choke me with those huge puppies of yours!" Kazumi struggled to say.

So this woman works with Lumine....at least...that's what I'm assuming since even Ichinose who has a direct connection with Lumine seems to be familiar with this ' Kazumi Shoko' girl.

" Sorry~" Ichinose backed off with a smile.

" Phew....I'm alive it seems..." Kazumi sighs.

" Anyways, why don't you two pack your bags in the back and enter the car. We're going to miss our flight-"

" Hold on." I interrupted her. She paused and looked at me.

" What are supposed to ' survey' in London?" I asked.

She smirks at me.

" Your upperclassmen, of course."

CHAPTER END!

All right!

An incredible change of location! It's temporary though.

And yes, the upperclassmen have been staying in England the entire time. Why do you think I never wrote anything about them except that vague Nagumo scene in Episode 4 or 5?

Now, that aside,

My announcement.

This fic will be placed on hold for a week or two.

A few things have developed in my personal life. And for a short time, I'd like to focus on developing them further without wasting all my time on writing.

So this fic along with my other fics will be on break.

You could say that for this fic.

Episode 15 is the season finale.

Season 2 will come later...

Probably when season 2 cote comes out.

Anyways, I hope you enjoyed this fic so far!

And I hope you will look forward to the next season with new arcs, new games, and new characters! (I'm talking about the upperclassmen. In case u might think I'm adding more OC's.)

And with that, I bid you adieu.

KawaiiLumine, out~

Was that suprising?

S2. Episode 0: Human

??? PoV

" Haah...haah..." I was breathing heavily.

" Is that all you got? Pathetic." One of the instructors remarked. Disappointment was obvious in his tone.

" Subject 12, you'd better continue running or else you'll have to endure punishment." He said.

N-No....I can't take any more-

WHOOSH!

I gasped for air when I suddenly felt a punch landing in my gut. I stumbled and fell on the floor, coughing repeatedly and trying to recover from such a strike.

" GET UP AND RUN." The horrible man glared at me.

Still coughing, I proceeded to stand up as quickly as I can before continuing to run laps.

I was expected to make 50 laps daily.

But these people.....these people are only calculating the amounts of laps I take with the minimum required to possibly reach **his** level.

That boy....Kiyotaka....

Ever since he entered our generation, he rapidly improved. Surpassing those of us who worked our hardest to get where we are now. And due to that, most of us began to resent him for it.

The more Kiyotaka grows....

The more expectations are placed upon us to do the same....

I hate him because of it too. I was petty but can anyone blame me? I'm passing to survive while he's breezing through and self-improving with each second he puts to the test. I sometimes wonder if he even has any real struggle like the rest of us do, because if he doesn't, then wouldn't he resemble a robot?

I've never spoken to him.

Nor have I ever heard him speak at all.

When he's assigned with a task, he accepts it without question, without change of expression. He just does it. And he does it better than we ever could.

Another reason why we hate him, I suppose.

How can another human being function like him?

Is he even human in the first place?

Or has he been through more pain than all of us to the point where it felt numb. Has he even felt any pain in his life? It's confusing to me. It leaves me befuddled whenever his results are announced to all of us.

" Subject 12, run faster!"

My thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the instructor's voice. I quickly began picking up more speed, desperate to not endure any more unnecessary punishment. Doing these physical tests are already stressful enough to my overall health, I don't think I can take any more than this.

" Subject 12.....run!" I hear a fellow genmate of mine say. I turn to look at her, she was a girl with scarlet colored hair and golden eyes.

She is Subject 10.

Isn't it strange? Each one of us were given names as if we were lab rats and specimen while Kiyotaka.....was given an actual name.

A name that passed him off as ' human'.

But why?

How could the most inhumane creature of us all be given the privilege to HAVE a name?

Why...

Why....

Why....

I asked myself that as I kept on running. I was losing my breath but I hadn't realized it at the time. My thoughts were turning angry by the second as I asked all the questions on how and why **Kiyotaka** gets away with everything stress-free.

" Keep running Subject 12! Your laps are almost finished!" I hear Subject 10 cheer.

Is it...?

Right....

1 more....lap.....

I just need to make one more lap-

" Ngh...." I drastically began slowing down.

" D-Damn it..." I mutttered.

" Subject 12! Please! Keep running, you're almost finished!" I hear Subject 10 desperately say.

But....

Finished, huh....

Maybe....I am finished....

" Subject 12 is going down today, I suppose. "

" Well, the weak never survive here. That's an undisputable fact..."

" I'm kind of jealous.....I wish to take his place right now.....so I can also be set free after exhausting my entire being..."

" Goodbye, Subject 12. It was nice studying with you..."

I hear many of my genmates say. They had finished their laps earlier than me. They improved while I stayed at the very bottom. Their tones were filled with pity, I could tell, and I absolutely hated it.....

But I felt....touched...

Almost relieved.....

Thud! My body finally collapsed to the floor.

" Heh. Seems like the **defective** finally ran out of gas." I hear the instructor say.

But.....my hearing....

Their voices felt....far away...

Am I.....going to pass out...?

Are my eyes...

Going to close....**forever?**

" It's time to dispose another broken Subject. " Another instructor sighs. It was getting harder for me to comprehend their words.

" Subject 12-!...."

Is Subject 10....yelling for me?

Ah....I can no longer hear her....

Haha.....so this is how it ends....

My blank story....

It ends here.....

" I'll pick him up. You go report to the professor." I managed to decipher from their fading conversation.

Goodbye.....Subject 10....

I'm sorry.....for failing to become stronger...

But weaklings do not deserve to live....

And now.....I'm.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Huh...?

I suddenly felt my body being lifted gently. My arm was placed over someone's shoulder as they holsted me up and began supporting me.

Why does this feel...gentle?

" You have one last lap. Right?" I hear a monotone voice speak to me.

" "

" Hey, can you hear me?" They spoke a bit more clearer.

" Y-Yes..." I managed to say.

" Good. Let's take our time. I'm about to finish my laps anyways." They said.

And so, the person who I couldn't make out from image, began

moving slowly while supporting me along.

Who is this?

Is this...a boy?

But...all my genmates are already done with their laps....and they're not allowed to restart unless instructed-

" I-Is that **Ayanokoji Kiyotaka** h-helping him?!"

" N-No way...."

" But why?"

" This is the first time....he's ever interacted with any of us...."

" What....?"

My hearing began clearing up. I managed to process their words.

Ayanokoji....

Ayanokoji Kiyotaka....

Wait.....**Kiyotaka?**

My eyes widen and I quickly glanced at the person who's supporting me and it truly was none other than the boy of whom I thought to be non-human.

" Well....this is a suprising act." One of the instructors mutter.

" We'd better inform the professor about this too." The other said.

The instructors....

They were about to dispose of me....

But **Kiyotaka** stepped in...and is currently helping me.....

But why?

Why would he help a weakling like me? I was about ready to die to not waste more of anyone else's time with disappointment over and over again.

" Why....?" I choked out.

" That girl. Subject 10 is crying." He replied.

" Crying...?" I turned to glance at Subject 10 to see that her eyes

were red. She was actually crying? For...me?

" I...see...." I said.

Subject 10....I'm sorry I made you cry...

" But..." I turn to look at **Kiyotaka** again. " Why would you even bother...?"

" Do you take me for someone heartless?" He shot back.

" Yes...." I admitted.

We were close to the finish.

" Then I suppose that will be my reason. I do not wish to be perceived as someone heartless." He said.

Really...?

Is that...true?

Ah....I see.

We were judging him. All of us were judging him. All of us were hating him because he simply did things better than we could and heightened the bare minimum results for us.

But not once did he look down on us.

Not once did he gloat about his results....

He simply followed orders like a robot...

We do the same....but we still complained from time to time...we still cry when it gets too tough. After all, we're just kids.

But Kiyotaka was different. He never expressed any emotion....not once....not ever. He did everything like a robot and yet he was given the qualities of a human.

I thought he was non-human.

All of us thought he was inhuman.

" I'm sorry...." I apologized sincerely. We ostracized him for such petty reasons, but if they're going to continue hating him then that's them.

Right now, he's helping me.

The least I could do is apologize for all the unfair thoughts I had of him.

" For what?" He asked. But I had a feeling he already knew.

" For....thinking you were different from us. Deep down, you're just like us....born in this white hell.....forced to endure straining tasks daily.....and win to survive." I said.

" Your results were unbelievable....we were jealous and angry because of it.....but I realized that it was just an act of pathetic behaviour. You worked hard....and the fault is ours for struggling to catch up." I said as we were meters away from the finish line.

" Hm...." he hummed and spoke no more.

Does he forgive me? I hope so...

Or maybe he began resenting me.....well...that's deserved.

Either way, I hoped my sincere words reached him....

" Hey, what's your name?" He suddenly asks.

" Huh?"

" Your name." He repeated.

" My....name?" I didn't have a name.

" Yes." He confirmed.

"....My name...is Subject-"

" A real name. Decide on one , right now." He said.

A real name....?

Why would he ask such a question....

So simple...and yet bizzare considering the context we're in....

A name....huh.....I haven't thought of that.

I wanted a name, but I never truly searched for a name I want. I thought it was but a hopeless dream to be seen as another human being instead of another test subject.

But....if I were to name myself.....

In this moment....

" My name...."

" Have you decided?" He asked.

" Yes...."

" What is it?"

" My name....is **Yagami Takuya.**"

We crossed the finish line.

" Finally. All right! All students assemble at the study room this instant!" I hear the instructor yell.

Kiyotaka gently removed my arm from his shoulder and made sure I was ready to move on my own.

We finally locked eyes.

And a small smile appears on his face.

Putting his hand out, he said,

" Nice to meet you, **Yagami Takuya**." He pronounced my name.

" My name is **Ayanokoji Kiyotaka**. " he introduced himself.....we introduced ourselves.....like actual people...?

Maybe....

I accepted his hand and shook it a bit.

" Nice to meet you too....." I said. My lips also formed a small smile in kind.

No...

*Kiyotaka is **human***

Just like the rest of us.

Chapter End!

Felt like writing an Episode 0 for season 2.

U get a glimpse of Kiyo's white room background but through the eyes of Yagami!

And small Kiyo smiling?

Is this Kiyo truly human? Or is it Yagami's own misunderstanding.

But I made it seem like he's human by the way I've written him here...right?

Then again, this is Yagami's PoV....

Anyways, the fic is still on hold. Will start uploading new episodes after my break.

But I hoped this was a fun and interesting read for ya'll while u wait.

That aside....

KawaiiLumine, out~

S2. Episode 1: Welcome to London!

Asahina PoV

" Hey, Nagumo. Did you hear? The two selected first years are scheduled to arrive later today!" I said.

" Hm..." He hummed to himself. Did he even hear me?

" Hey!" I poked his arm.

" Asahina, please don't do that.....my tower of cards almost tumbled." He softly grumbled. Ah, right, he was busy making another tower of cards.

Weird hobby, but you do you bud.

....

Well, you never used to do this before. This is only something you picked up on after you changed entirely....

You may look like the Nagumo I know.

But you don't act like the Nagumo nor do you longer sound like the Nagumo I once acquainted myself with.

Ah, reminiscence aside...

" But aren't you excited to meet your Kouhais? " I asked.

" Perhaps so..." He says as he balances another card on the tower.

" You don't sound excited..." I muttered.

" But I am excited, believe it or not." He said in a dry tone. " Though I do wonder why you seem unusually fired up about our kouhais.....did one of them catch your interest?" He finally glances at me.

I grinned, feeling giddy.

" Yep!"

" Who?"

" Ichinose Honami-chan!"

" Oh." He said, his tone quickly sounding disinterested as he focused back on his tower of cards.

Geez, you seem bored at the thought of her! Does she really not catch any interest from you at all?

Well, I just instantly liked her because she seems like a person I can get along with! A fellow girl must always conquer another fellow girl! And she seems outgoing and exciting, which is what this dreary place needs!

" Fine then, Nagumo." I leaned closer to his side. " What about you? Who caught YOUR interest?" I was honestly curious.

He paused for a bit.

I looked toward his hands that paused in the middle of stacking cards. I'm impressed with how steady they are, no shakiness whatsoever. It attributes to the person he is right now. Strong.

" Ayanokoji."

".... Ayanokoji?"

" Kiyotaka."

"...Kiyotaka?"

" Yes." He said before continuing his stacking.

Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, huh. Ah, I recall him now, he's the same boy who pulled off the secret route during round 1. Seriously, that was something I never expected anyone to pull off but Ayanokoji..... seems like there's more to him than meets the eye.

" So..." I wiggled my eye brows suggestively, " Is Ayanokoji-kun going to be your favorite kouhai~?" I teased.

"Hm...I wonder about that..." he said, " Maybe so.....maybe not....."

" But..."

He places the final card, completing his tower.

" I wouldn't want him as my enemy....."

Ayanokoji PoV

" How long have you known the director, Kazumi?" I inquired.

We were currently in the car. Kazumi Shoko was driving, Ichinose was front passenger seat, while I stayed in the backseat. We were making our way to the airport but Tokyo's massive traffic was quite annoying and I highly doubt Kazumi was always this patient during her first time around.

From her character and first impressions, I assume that she used to be pretty hot-headed and ambitious but mellowed down in recent years. Perhaps it's due to fortune or the misfortune of working under someone like Lumine. It makes me wonder how that woman treats her employees.

" How long..? Hm, well I've known her since I applied to be her secretary."

" And when was that?"

" 4 years ago." She replied.

" And how old are you?" I asked.

" 24." She answered.

24, huh.....she looks a bit younger than that. She could pass off as a normal student in our school or any other high school but I guess she has good genes like the director.

" I see...." I nod.

She suddenly chuckles, " If you're going to try and hit on me. Don't bother. You're way below the age minimum to date me. It could get me arrested."

" What? I wasn't-"

"I'm just kidding." She said.

" Oh...I see." I leaned back to my seat.

" Have you never flirted with a girl before, Ayanokoji-kun?" Ichinose asked with a giggle.

I roll my eyes at her teasing intentions.

" No. Do you see girls flocking around me? I don't think so." I replied with sarcasm.

" Ichinose-san." Kazumi said.

" Hm?" Ichinose looked to her.

" Do you consider Ayanokoji handsome?" She asked.

" Why, yes! He is quite good looking. He ranked top 5 in the most handsome boys in our school year." She said.

" Huh? I ranked what in what of our school year?" I raised a brow in confusion.

" Oh....so he ranks that high? Hmm...then I'm guessing the girls aren't flocking over him because of his personality?" Kazumi mused.

" Hey...." I didn't like being subtly trashed in conversation when the person in question (me) is present....

" Hm, perhaps so! However...." Ichinose holds up her index finger.
" I personally find him quite charming!" She cheered.

If I didn't know of Ichinose's true nature, then I would've been acting like a gushing schoolboy from being complimented by such a beautiful girl like her. Any boy in my place would be reduced to such a state and nobody can really blame them. After all, it's been stereotyped that boys are more likely than not to take compliments from girls to their grave. Even just one compliment will give them a reason to continue living.

Though that is, if boys are too wrapped up in their own heads about getting a girlfriend.

But such a thing does not apply to me anymore. I know Ichinose's true nature and I shouldn't take her passing words too seriously since it's likely an act she puts up to mask her other personality. I wonder if Kazumi knows how Ichinose truly is as a person, but I assume she does since they seem to know each other through Lumine.

" Ehh? That so? Hm, I guess I can understand that." Kazumi says.

"Please refrain from talking about me any further in the duration of this car ride..."

Haneda Airport, Ota city, Tokyo, Japan....

I've forgotten how massive airports are in person. The last time I entered an airport was during my father's ' business' travel to the States. I still recall the times when I'd stare at the other kids my age holding their parents' hand as a way to ensure they feel comfort and to not get lost.

I was curious on how that felt back then. But I never initiated it. It was absolutely pointless.

And besides, I'm older now, which makes it even more pointless to remember an envy I used to possess years ago when I was still young and....trapped. But now I'm free....well as free as I can be for the time being.

" Let's head towards Terminal 3. Make sure to place your bags in the escalator thingy and uh make sure you got no harmful objects on you." Kazumi instructed us.

Ichinose and I nod, following Kazumi's instructions down to a tee. Once it was our turn in the line, we both placed our bags in the escalator and I made sure I had no metal or anything suspicious on me before passing through the metal detector.

" All right, all three of us were provided seats in the first class department. " Kazumi informed,

" Ichinose-san sits beside me while Ayanokoji-kun sits alone but not too far from us. " She read our tickets before looking towards me, " If you want to change seats then now is probably the best time to decide. "

" Nah, I'm fine with my arrangement." I said. I was actually relieved that I can get some personal ' me ' time during this travel.

Kazumi nods. " All right then. So no complaints from you, but what about Ichinose-san-"

" I'm good with it! Come on! Let's catch up on a few things, Kazumi-san!" Ichinose grabbed Kazumi's wrist.

" H-hey be gentle!" Kazumi reprimanded her but was ignored as they both went to their assigned seats.

I sighed as I began to look for my seat.

C-12....

C-12....

Ah, there it is. My eyes landed on an unoccupied seat. The chair looked extremely comfortable and extremely easy to fall asleep to and there was a mini flat screen TV on the front with high quality earphones. How pleasant.

I took my seat.

London....

London was where the upperclassmen were living in the entire time. Perhaps it was to decrease interruption during our first game? Or have they been there longer, perhaps before we first years even enrolled in this school.

If it's the latter, then why were they sent there? Is it because one of the later games were conducted there and thus they were required to move?

So many questions....

" Sir?"

I can come up with a few theories but without actual confirmation or evidence to back it up then they'll stay as theories....

" Sir...?"

Or am I overthinking things at such an early stage? I just got on the plane, and the ' survey' thing that we're supposedly going to do in London sounds strange. What's the catch?

" Sir."

The director has been spontaneous with her decisions. Electing myself and Ichinose to go ' survey' our upperclassmen? Whom of which, are currently living in London for some reason? So many pieces don't fit.

Could it be that-

Tap!

I felt a light tap on the head. I snapped out of my thoughts quickly and looked to see who had done that. My eyes landed on a woman in uniform, she must be the flight attendant.

" Sir. I apologize for tapping your head. But I'd like to ask if you want beverages?" She asked and presented to me some delicious drinks.

Hmm....what to choose. I do feel a bit parched. But as tempting as these drinks are, they're not currently the stimulation to satisfy my tongue.

" If it's not too much to ask, can I have some ice cream and a glass of water instead?" I instead requested.

The lady smiles kindly, " very well, sir." She said.

" Thank you." I then averted my eyes to blankly stare at the magazine in front of me. I picked it up and it seems to be the latest issue with a beautiful girl on the front cover. Is it an idol?

' **Sakura Airi**' was her name. She looked incredibly beautiful, I must say.

I placed the magazine back where I took it though. Perhaps I oughta sleep to pass the time.

Well, after I devour my ice cream of course....

I was suddenly jolted awake when I felt a slim finger poking my cheek. I opened my eyes and immediately turned to scrutinize the culprit.

" Hey." She whispered. Ah, it was just Ichinose.

" Ichinose....what the hell..." I grumbled, sounding sleepy. I glanced around to see that it was night time and we were still flying. Everyone else in first class was sleeping and yet this woman had the gall to wake me up?

I will not tolerate such disrespect-

" Sorry~" She says before sitting on the empty seat next to me, while I was situated at the window seat.

" What do you want...." I asked.

" Wanna brainstorm on what might happen at the ' survey' program?" She suggests.

" ...Are you serious?" I deadpanned.

" Very much so." She replied.

" No." I shuffled to the opposite direction and tried to fall back asleep into my blank wonderland....

" I'll order some late night ice cream-"

" Very well. Let's discuss."

" I estimate that we're about to land in the airport by morning. So we got a few hours to discuss."
Ichinose said.

" Mhm." I hummed after eating a scoop.

" Shall I start?" She asked.

" Go ahead." I took another scoop. Mmm. Yummy.

" I'm thinking that there's no catch whatsoever." She said.

" Is that so?"

" Yep! I believe we've just been given this privilege to gain information from our senpais. If other students were to have put on a show like you and me, then they'd be sent here too." She stated.

" What do you think?" She asks.

" It's plausible." I said.

" See? Anyways, what about you? What do you imagine it to be?"
She asks casually.

" Who knows? " I said.

" Aww come on! I thought we agreed to talk about it!" She pouts.

" ..."

I sigh, relenting to her just this once after having no proper excuse to avoid this.

" It might seem far-fetched....or not....but I'm thinking there might be a chance to gain something from all this besides information." I said.

" Hm?" Ichinose tilts her head curiously.

" I won't specify, since..." I turned to her. " You are an enemy."

She laughs but nods along.

"It'll take certain moves to unlock the possibility,,,,,, that's all I will say. " I said.

" So who do you think will unlock it first? Me or You?" She said in a challenging tone.

" Who knows? Perhaps neither of us." I shrug. I didn't really want to attempt but I am prepared to sabotage Ichinose if she truly understood what I meant.

" Hmm....all right..." She stands up. " It was a short talk, but I should let you sleep now."

She bows politely, " Good night, Ayanokoji-kun."

" Good night, Ichinose." I replied. She smiles once more before turning around and leaving me, returning to her seat next to Kazumi.

I finished my ice cream before placing it to the side. I snuggled back to my previous sleeping position.

I'm not sure how long we are to stay in London....but I'm going to assume that it's for a week.

Hopefully, Horikita can prevent our classmates from messing up for the time being....

Horikita PoV

I felt sighing already. I didn't like this position but I have no choice except to do my best and make sure we don't go any lower than this. At least until Ayanokoji-kun returns.

" This group is not going to work." I bluntly stated.

" YEAH? NO SHIT!" They angrily replied.

" S-Suzune-chan, you need to be patient!" Kikyo tried to lighten the situation.

But how could she?

I mean, look at this group.

Karuizawa, Matsushita, Sudo, Ijuin, Hondo.

These are the students I was assigned to teach. This is the group that Ayanokoji-kun wanted to prioritize, and thus, he left it to me.

Fortunately enough, I have Kikyo as my assistant but time is ticking and my patience is running out,

" Ugh, math is so frustrating!" Karuizawa whines.

" For once, I agree with you." Hondo and Ijuin muttered.

" Such a bullshit subject." Sudo said in the same frustrated tone.

"..." Matsushita offered no comment.

" It's only a hard subject because you're all idiots." I said.

" Hey!" Karuizawa and the other 3 boys glares at me.

" I'm trying!" Karuizawa said.

" So are we!" The other 3 boys said.

" Not everyone can understand math easily, Horikita-san."

Matsushita said, her tone calm.

" Math IS easy to understand if you'd just given it your all to try and understand the basics from primary and middle school." I facepalmed.

" Yeah? Well, you know my situation at the time, don't you? I had no time for that...." Karuizawa muttered.

I bit the inside of my cheek. I just recalled Karuizawa's situation from before...

" Right.....sorry." I muttered an apology, " But right now, I have to do everything I can to make sure we all improve before the midterms. We have 3 months to get better. The school was kind enough to give us 3 months to prepare, but with the progress we're making? I doubt it's enough." I continued to pound them about it.

They groaned and their expressions showed that they were getting fed up by my teaching methods.

....

.....No.

This isn't my teaching method. This is how Ayanokoji **instructed** me to teach.

" I'm leaving them to you." he casually said.

I read the papers and the names of the people I'm working with. I tried to hold back a groan but I wouldn't be suprised if it got out either way because this....

This is just unbelievable.

" So not only are you going to leave me as temporary leader..." I gripped the paper tightly, almost wanting to rip it apart. I glare at him.

" But you're going to leave these IDIOTS to me?" I said.

" Well, a pack of idiots oughta stay together, no?" He said, " And you're its alpha leader, Horikita."

SWISH!

I swung a kick to his shins but he intercepted it by kicking my leg back. I flinched due to the sudden pain but I didn't dare show more than that.

" Nice try." He said, his voice laced with subtle sarcasm.

" Tch." I sighed.

" Fine then. I'll only accept this for the sake of class points." I said.

" I expect nothing less." he said.

" So I have to play patient with them....and take it slow-"

" No. Don't do that." He interrupts.

" Huh? Why?" I asked. What is he scheming now?

" Don't go easy on them. Make sure to act impatient and act completely strict, more than the usual strictness you exhibit." He said.

" Huh? But that would only aggravate them." I frowned, not understanding his plan, " Won't that lead them to arguments and end up leaving? I don't understand."

" Just trust me." he said. " And make sure to keep an eye on Sudo, Karuizawa, and Matsushita especially. Those three are the biggest priority in the group." He said.

" Why?" I asked.

First, he wants me to use a method that would just make them go mad....

And now he wants me to keep an eye out for those 3 specific students?

" In fact, why is Matsushita in my group? She doesn't seem to have bad grades..." I muttered in realization.

" She'll prove detrimental to our class if we let her be. I suspect she is holding back her scores." He said.

Like you?

Great, another student who refused to do their best.....

"What made you suspect it?" I asked.

" You'll find out yourself once you follow through my plan." He said.

ugh, this guy.

" All right then, what about Karuizawa? Why are you telling me to prioritize her? I already have an idea as to why Sudo is important, but I'm left blank on Karuizawa." I asked.

" She can learn."

" What?"

" She can learn things faster than you might expect." He looks away, " Just give her time. And don't act all soft. Pressure her and turn her into a diamond."

" That same mindset applies to everyone else in the class as well." he adds.

"..."

" Good luck, Horikita. "

Pressure them, huh.....

.....

Ayanokoji-kun, it seems I have no choice but to follow through with your plan. I don't know how this will end since I can't seem to find a positive outcome to such a tactic, but I'll do my best to achieve the vision you want. Whatever it may be.

I braced myself...

" Seriously, all five of your are utter garbage." I bluntly said.

" SUZUNE-CHAN?!" Kikyo gasped.

The five aforementioned garbage looked incredibly offended.

Let's see how this plays out, Ayanokoji-kun.....

Ayanokoji PoV

" The big ben!" Ichinose says in an excited tone.

That's right. We're in London now.

We arrived an hour ago. Kazumi rented a car and is currently driving us to where our senpais are supposedly residing for the time being. The outside view is vastly different compared to my time in Japan and the States. There's a different to feel to it, I suppose.

" Ayanokoji-kun, did you look at the big ben?" Ichinose asks.

" Yeah Yeah..." I turned to the window and stared at the huge clock tower, the great bell of London. Or as commonly referred to as ' The Big Ben'.

Ichinose sighs, leaning back to her seat. " I'm really excited..." She said.

" Hey, Kazumi-san. Will we able to go out and check out the attractions during our stay?" Ichinose asked. Seems like she was serious.

" Hm....not sure. But it's likely an opportunity will arise, and when it does, I'll tell you right away." She assures. Ichinose nods, satisfied by that answer.

I wonder what the senpais are like...

Though, the one I'm most interested in is the blond student who betrayed Horikita's brother.

I do not plan to exact Horikita's revenge, but I did hear that this same blonde student is an excellent one. From the bits and pieces that Lumine spilled about him, he seems worth surveying and looking into. Hopefully when I arrive, his presence can be obvious to me because there's a possibility that most of the upperclassmen will also have blonde hair.

Oh look, Buckingham Palace...

" We're here." Kazumi stopped the car as soon she announced that.

Ichinose and I quickly exited the vehicle with our bags in hand. We looked towards the building and we both expressed our surprise, although hers was more visible compared to mine.

" It's....like a mega hotel..." She said in shock.

" It's more of a resort, actually. There's a lot more inside and back of the building." Kazumi chuckles.

" And you're responsible for it, Kazumi?" I inquired.

" Yep. I'm the head honcho of this very building!" She said with pride before beckoning us to follow her to the entrance where we were then greeted with the awaiting figure of a girl with chocolate brown hair and a flower hairclip as an accessory with an amulet visible down her neck.

" Hello Kouhais!" She greeted.

" Asahina, what are you doing here?" Kazumi raised a brow.

" I couldn't help it, Kazumi-san!" She wipes away a fake tear, " I'm too excited to meet them! Please forgive me!" She said.

Kazumi sighs. " Fine, whatever. Anyways, these two are-"

"Ayanokoji and Ichinose!" The amulet girl took both of our hands individually and began shaking them simulatenously.

" I am Asahina Nazuna, your senpai! And hopefully your favorite." She winks.

So she's our senpai....

" Nice to meet you Asahina-senpai!" Ichinose quickly returned the favor with enthusiasm of her own.

" The pleasure is mine! " She turns to me, " What? No greeting for your senpai? How cold."

" Oh...uh..." I cleared my throat. " Nice to meet you....Asahina-senpai."

" KAWAII!" She blurted out before covering her mouth and looking bashful all of a sudden, " Sorry!" she said.

She's....spontaneous....but in a more....cute way?

" Anyways..." She stops covering her mouth and gives us a welcoming smile.

" Welcome to London!"

CHAPTER END!

....No, BlueEmo. I am not a tsundere for uploading a chapter this early in my break. I just felt the sudden need to write and so I did it.

You won't see this fic getting new chapters for a week or two. This will be my last violation to my own promise.

I hope you enjoyed it though! Not much happened yet, but it's only ep 1 for this fic's season 2.

Well, see you in a week or two!

KawaiiLumine, out~

S2. Episode 2: Survey....

Ayanokoji PoV

The interior was bigger than I initially expected. I looked around and every single detail, every little item, simply screamed 'Luxury'.

We were informed that the director owned this building but all its operations were handled by Kazumi Shoko. I'm curious if the director perhaps hid some secrets in this building, but as psychotic as she is, I wouldn't put her on any level of stupidity. There's no doubt that she buried any secrets or weaknesses to places nobody could reach.

"Asahina, could you stop clinging on to Ichinose?" Kazumi said.

"Eh? But I want to get to know my favorite kouhai!" She pouts.

"Eh? I'm your favorite?" Ichinose asked, seemingly flustered. She made her mask seem believable.

"Of course! After all, we have similar masks!"

" Eh?" Ichinose's expression froze.

What?

I, too, began staring at Asahina with a suspicious look. The girl in question only smiled as if nothing had happened, but she managed to catch Ichinose Honami off guard. " Same Masks" She says? Does Asahina Nazuna also wear a mask? Is the Asahina Nazuna we're currently talking to, a mask?

" Just kidding, Kouhai-chan~" Asahina squeezes Ichinose's cheeks, which made the latter jolt in surprise.

" S_Senpai!" Ichinose was embarrassed. I was watching her be treated like a child.

" Anyways, I should go. I'm sure Kazumi-san is reaching her boiling point the longer I stay." She winks at the gray haired woman jokingly.

The latter replied with an unamused look ,

" Good. Now scram." Kazumi ordered and pointed to a hallway.

" Yeah, yeah~" Asahina chuckles before looking towards Ichinose and I one last time.

" I'll see you two later!" She says before running off, happily skipping away....

Ichinose and I glanced toward one another with a mutual understanding. That there might be more to the upperclassmen than we expect. Kazumi Shoko releases a sigh of relief before looking towards us and gesturing her hand, asking us to follow her. We silently complied and did just that.

" Asahina-senpai is quite the lively one." Ichinose says.

" Indeed...." I agreed. In other words, Ichinose is basically telling me that Asahina Nazuna was suspicious.

" Yep. One of the few that are still lively in her year." Kazumi said

" What about the others? " I inquired.

" Not so much, I suppose. I mean..." She stops and turns to us with a serious expression." You're both aware of the nature of this school...."

Indeed, painfully so. By Kazumi's expression alone, it indicates that Asahina's year has suffered a lot more than us as they move forward. We just started but everyone in my year (with the exception of Ichinose and myself), consider it hell. It's already tiring enough to predict what hurdles we may encounter, but I am determined to endure it all and achieve victory for my peace.

" But why is Asahina-senpai staying so lively...?" Ichinose wonders, " Is it a coping mechanism?"

Kazumi smirks, " You may ask her that yourself. After all, you are here to ' survey' , yes?" She said.

Right, we are here to ' survey'. And yet, I feel as though there's something important detail that Kazumi is hiding from us, maybe she wanted to tell us but not now. I didn't feel like wasting time, so I resolved myself to ask right away.

" Kazumi."

" Hm?"

" Are you hiding something from us?" I narrowed my gaze.

" What do you mean?" She played dumb. It was obvious and she didn't intend to try too much to hide it.

" This is a big place, Kazumi-san." Ichinose began speaking, " And although we haven't seen all there is to see within this resort, I have no doubt that it is as you say. Large. Which leads me to think.....that there must be another reason why we're here. We just came under the excuse of ' survey'." She said.

We're both on the same page as expected.

" Seriously....you two.....heh." She shakes her head and shrugs, " Actually, I wanted to surprise you both later. But I'm not interested in stalling further if both of you are wearing such serious expressions.....yeah, there is another reason why you're here. However, the student survey wasn't entirely an excuse."

" Huh?" both Ichinose and I said.

" While you were definitely sent here to survey your upperclassmen.....you were also sent here to work as hotel/resort staff."

" Staff?" Ichinose said, surprised.

Staff? So for the time being, we are to work here?

" That's right." Kazumi nods. " You guys will rotate between the several positions on a daily basis. And it's not that we're understaffed, but this was the Director's instructions that both you two and I have to follow. "

" And what if we don't?" I asked.

" Then that'd be a shame." She smiles.

" Why is that?" Ichinose asked.

" You see, if we get bad reviews because of your lack of effort, then as consequence, class points will be subtracted from both of your classes and an additional punishment will be applied which I will go over later on." She says.

"" Something is amiss.

" Kazumi, you say that we're hotel staff that rotates between different positions on a daily basis. However, I'm led to assume that you WANT us to think that, to think that we're ' backup' hotel staff but if I read into what you just said a moment ago...." I sighed before looking into her grey orbs.

" We're actually the main hotel staff, right?"

"Heh." She chuckles. " Yes. That is correct. You two will be the main powerhouse of this large establishment, so you'd best practice your skills in entertaining and servicing guests. And also get used to the surroundings and different rooms in this environment."

" So..." Ichinose glances to me before looking back at Kazumi, " Kazumi-san will guide us for today?"

" Yep." She replied.

So that's how it is. It seems there was a catch. And if there is a reason for deducting class points, then it's very likely that there is a method to gain them. I'm guessing it will relate to the reviews the guests will leave once their stay is over.

" So for a week, we are to service guests? I can understand that. But I'd like to ask something that's been bothering me for a while...." I said.

" Feel free." Kazumi said.

" Does this hotel operate 24/7? Even before we arrived, has it

always been like this? You told us the upperclassmen live here and Asahina-senpai's presence confirmed that. What do they do? Do they endure these **games** in this place? Or is it a resting spot." I asked.

" No. The hotel does not operate 24/7. It's actually rarely open to guests and it's really just intended to serve the students who live here....however, to avoid suspicion, we are to accommodate guests once in a while as to keep up the reputation of this luxurious hotel being ' impossible' to get into. And by leaving us with good reviews, we will ensure no problems of sudden interruption with the games that sometimes take place in this building." She answered.

" Hm....alright. But regarding the good reviews, will that ensure us the increase of class points after our stay?" I asked.

" Geez, do let me explain that later. " She shakes her head, " Let me show you two around first, okay? And then I'll tell you all the details I'm allowed to tell."

" Sounds fair. " Ichinose agrees.

Well, Kazumi isn't wrong. I'd better use this day to practice for whatever job I may have to take up tomorrow and also my ability service guests and entertain them if needed be. So it's optimal to go along with her for now and ask questions later.

" All right. Lead the way, Kazumi." I said.

Horikita PoV

" Suzune-chan?"

" Hm?"

" Everyone stormed off...."

" I know."

" What are we...going to do now?"

" That, I do not know." I sighed. " I followed Ayanokoji-kun's instructions....I acted hard....and expected , it only aggravated them."

Kikyo also sighs with me and takes the seat beside me, she patted my back.

" Ayanokoji-kun's thoughts and actions.....his methods.....are incredibly confusing..." She said.

" It's only confusing because he tends to act vague. An annoying trait he has." I grumbled.

"....But maybe Ayanokoji-kun wants us to learn it ourselves. To be...independent?" She suggested weakly.

" Then what's the point of him being leader? If he wants us to be independent, then he will not have taken up the leader role. It's contradicting." I fired back.

" I think Suzune-chan still has a narrow point of view..." Kikyo chuckled.

I turned to her with an irritated look, " You seem to know better, Kikyo. Pray tell, why exactly do I have a 'narrow' point of view when all I'm speaking is logical points."

" Well...." She goes into thinking mode, " Ayanokoji-kun is our leader but right now, he's not here, right?"

" Right."

" Then.....shouldn't we be independent when our leader is not around?" She said.

"Still, he needs to specify what exactly he wants us to do. I already told him that I'm not as a stand-in, in fact, why did he even pick ME? " I stubbornly refused to accept Kikyo's answer.

" Perhaps this is a test, Suzune-chan. A test to see how useful you

can be to him.....that's the best and most realistic thing I could think of." She admitted.

How useful I am....

That does sound like something he'd do...

" Even so...." I sigh. " I need to understand his intentions....I can't make this plan work if I don't understand the direction he wants me to take...." I mutter.

"Maybe....he's just providing us the foundation." Kikyo said.

" Foundation?"

" Mhm. He gave us the foundation, and it's our job to build off of it. He told you to keep an eye out for Sudo, Karuizawa, and Matsushita-san, right? Maybe we just have to figure out the best direction.Horikita-san, please think as ' yourself' and not Ayanokoji-kun." She said.

....Think like myself....

Haah....last time I decided to act on my own impulse, I screwed everything up. Only Ayanokoji-kun can decide my movements.....

But.....I have to try. And this time, I'll succeed the way he wants me to. For myself, for Kikyo, for my classmates, and for my late brother. I need to push forward....

"....All right." I sat up straight.

I turned towards Kikyo. " I think I know what Ayanokoji-kun wants me to do."

" But I thought you're going to-"

" It's my interpretation, Kikyo." I said. I do not completely understand Ayanokoji's intentions, but I have a guess.

Kikyo gave me a blank look for a while before her lips formed an encouraging smile,

" Okay then!" She said.

(1 pm....)

" Haah...." I placed down my bags and plopped on my big soft bed.

After hours of getting to know the layout of the hotel resort and its rooms, Ichinose and I were finally allowed to enter our own personal rooms for the time being. This building has 70 floors in its hotel side while the resort at back of it had 6 dorms and 4 storeys each. I was situated in the hotel building, the 44th floor, while Ichinose was in the same building situated at the 50th floor.

Seriously... we're assigned to service this huge establishment? At least, we'll serve in one position and switching between daily. But we're still "backup" so if other positions require some to fill it, both Ichinose and I have to take the initiative.

Well, we're free the whole afternoon and night. Perhaps I should use a few hours of my time to study the job positions here, in order to understand the way to do things like other hotel resorts do. With that in mind, I got up from my bed and took out the book Kazumi left us with and made my way to the study table. I flipped the page open and began reading in silence.

This needs to be engraved in my mind quickly. Must work efficiently.

After all, during the tour, Kazumi finally explained the reward system placed in our survey. If the customers leave their week stay with bad reviews, then we'll be deducted class points. But if they leave with good reviews, then we can be rewarded with class points. Another thing to add, is that customers will be provided with private points as soon as they check in the hotel resort. If we satisfy them well enough, then there's a chance they could leave either of us with a huge tip.

Private points and Class points....

This is not entirely a game....but rather....a chance to gain redemption for my class and stall Ichinose's.

However....

I still want to continue my search for that blonde student. My curiosity is killing me at this point, but the class points presented themselves and now I'm stuck in a small dilemma. Class points? Or the feeling of satiating my curiosity? Either choices are linked to my own selfish desired. Curiosity and Freedom. By gaining class points, I will be able to catch up with Class A and overtake them which will serve as entertainment for the director. By satiating my curiosity, I can talk to that specific student and ask them a few questions that will no doubt be useful for me in the future if my prediction is correct.

Well, we'll see how this plays out tomorrow....but for now I oughta memorize everything before doing anything else.

Kazumi PoV

It was late at night, I was in a video call with Director Lumine, discussing the details about this survey and also the behavior of the upper students.

" I see....that's good~" The director nods.

" We'll have a ton of guests this week, everything is set up just the way you instructed." I assured her.

" Great!" She smiles from my screen, " Make sure to keep track of Ichinose and Ayanokoji." She said.

I smiled. " Of course, Director...."

" Well, thank you for the report, Kazumi. It's time we end this call so you can get some good night's rest-"

" Wait." I said. The director's eyes widened in surprise and she wore a blank smile.

" Yes? Do you have something else you wish to discuss?" She asks.

"How is.....' that' going for you..?" I asked.

" Oh? Worried now, are we?" She said, amused. But it wasn't mutual.

" I'm serious, Lumine." I dropped her title or any honorifics.

"" She stayed silent for a bit. I waited for her to answer. This was....important to me and she knew that.

" It hurts." She finally admits, " The worst pain I've felt in a while.....but nothing I can't handle." She added.

"How much do you estimate you'll have left...?" I asked.

" How much time? Hmm...." She wore a thinking expression, But what irked me was the fact that she doesn't seem to be taking seriously at all!

" Enough time, I suppose." She said.

" What?"

" I have enough time....enough time to see how this plays out. To see how this ends." She grins. " So cheer up, will you? Don't go all sentimental on a horrible being like me! You and Honami should look out for each other once I'm gone." she says, cheerfully.

You speak of your death without fear.

Why do I feel pity for someone like you? I ask myself that every single day.

In the end, you and I, this is just business. You are my employer and I am your employee. There's nothing more to it than that.

And....you're also a murderer. You've taken the lives of others. The world would condemn you to hell if they ever knew of the countless atrocities you've committed to people.

And yet....

I...

" I understand." I nod.

" Great! Have a good night, Kazumi." She waves good bye before ending our call.

I still couldn't hate you for it.

(Next day.....5 AM...)

Ayanokoji PoV

I wore the uniform I was instructed to use. A red long sleeved blazer with golden buttons, and black pants with black shoes. There was also a silver nametag with my name on it.

' Kiyotaka'

So my first name? I suppose it's natural since the customers are likely to be British people, considering where I'm currently at. My first name would be much easier to pronounce than my last name.

I sighed to myself as I opened the door, ready to start my first day as a hotel employee....

" Ah, Mr.Oliver." I spoke in english as I searched for his name in the list. " Your room should be 206, 2nd floor." I told the middle aged man once I found it.

" Thanks, lad." He said after I handed him the key. He bid goodbye before entering the elevator with one of the bellhops that was holding his luggage.

I was assigned front desk duty for today. In charge of keeping track of the checking in and outs of guests. As for Ichinose, I believe she was assigned with housekeeper duties since apparently, a few rooms were reported to be untidy.

" Welcome to Shining Star Hotel and Resort. May I have your name?" I said to the next person who came up to me. This time, it was a woman, likely in her late 30's. She seemed pretty well-off as expected for someone who decided to put reservations for a luxurious place such as this.

" Emily Evans. " She said.

" Okay, Miss Evans...." I searched down the list and found her name. " Ah, there it is. " I look up towards her and carefully selected the assigned keys.

" Here you go, Miss Evans. Room 450, floor 4. Enjoy your stay." I said as politely as I could while handing her the key.

" Don't you seem a little too young to be working here?" She suddenly said after taking the key. Her voice had no malicious intention, it was pure curiosity.

I decided to humor her, " Ah, yes. Well, more of a temporary job." I clarified. It wasn't completely a lie.

" Hmm...I see. Very well, good day to you." She says politely.

" And to you as well, madam. Enjoy your stay." I responded in kind. She soon left towards the second elevator.

" Receptionist boy! " Someone loudly said. Were they referring to me? I am the receptionist....

I looked towards the front door and I was met with the sight of a tall male individual with a noticeably well-built figure. His golden blonde mane was combed slick back reaching shoulder length at the very least. His expression looked confident.....or cocky. He gave the aura of someone who demands attention and royalty.

" Were you referring to me, Sir?" I asked.

" Who else am I referring to? Your seat? Don't play dumb now, Receptionist boy!" He laughs heartily.

I already felt like sighing but I held it in for now.

" My apologies." I started, " Welcome to Shining Star Hotel and Resort. May I have your na-" But he interrupts.

" **Koenji Rokusuke**. Now hurry it up! I wish to dabble in the quality service this establishment has to offer Ha Ha!" He said, pulling out a mirror to gaze at himself.

Koenji Rokusuke...?

Is he Japanese? Maybe his family has japanese blood because from first impressions he looks more foreign than japanese. And right now, he's speaking english too and it sounds completely natural. If he is Japanese, then I'm curious if he knows how to speak the language as well.

" All right, give me a second sir...." My eyes went towards the list that appeared on the screen. It didn't take long for me to find his name since I immediately spotted within the VIP section of the list.

" It seems you're in the VIP list." I look up from the screen, " Your room is at the top floor, Room 701. Enjoy your stay." I handed him the key and he took it brazenly.

" How about you lighten up your mood in my presence, Receptionist boy? If you did, then I would've tipped you 1 private point! Haha!" He chuckled loudly before passing through the hallway towards the elevator.

Haah....troublesome guy.

" Hello, receptionist-san~" A familiar voice said.

I already knew who it was. I sighed again once my eyes met hers. It was Asahina Nazuna.

" Hello, Asahina-senpai." I greeted.

" Hello, Kouhai!" She smiles.

Hm....this seems like a good chance for me to ask a few questions.

" Senpai-"

" Could it be that Ayanokoji-kun wants to find a certain someone?" She asked.

How did she....

" Oh? I guessed right? Nice!" She says.

" How did you know?" I asked.

" I know the eyes of a hunter, Ayanokoji-kun. Once a person decides on a prey, their eyes can give out that sign. Well, as long as you're good in picking it out just from their eyes. It's an acquired skill of mine after working with someone with a similar attitude." She grins.

The eyes of a hunter...

In other words, she's saying that she has good observation skills. If I'm not careful, she might be able to discern whatever intentions I may develop during my stay here and call me out on it. If I let that happen then she will prove a troublesome individual to come across in the near future if ever we encounter more than I may expect.

But for now, I might as well play along and continue onwards....

" I see, that's impressive. You have an amazing skill, Senpai." I said.

" Ohhh don't make me blush~" She winks.

" And you are right. I am looking for someone. A student with blonde hair. A student who-

" Betrayed **Horikita Manabu**?" she finished it for me.

" Yeah." I nod.

" Hmm....and why are you looking for him?" She asks.

" I'm curious as to why he did it. Director Lumine mentioned Horikita Manabu doing well for three years...and was about to succeed. Not only that, the same blonde kouhai was also a trusted ally of his but then all of a sudden, that kouhai betrayed him? I'm curious about that. Was the trust not mutual?" I said.

" Hmm...I wonder.....was the trust **mutual**..... " She emphasized the last word for some reason.

" You're leading me to assume otherwise with that strange emphasis on ' mutual' senpai." I said.

She laughs, " Really? Hahahaha!"

" But....in regards to that person you're looking for..." She composes herself and looks deep into my eyes. " **Nagumo Miyabi**. That's his name."

Nagumo Miyabi...

" Who is he? As a student, I mean." I asked further.

" A pretty intimidating guy but relatively harmless." She chuckles, " He's lead us to victory multiple times."

" Lead? So he's your leader?" I asked.

" Yep."

" Of which class?" I asked.

" You guess that yourself, golden eyes." She laughs. " Anyways....I'd better head off now. You've got quite a line waiting for you~" She tilted her head and lets me see a long line of guests behind her.

Tch.

" Nice chatting with you! Time to search for Honami-chan!" She chirps before leaving with a wave of see ya later. " Bye bye!"

Why are all the female species around me so...unusual.

" Um , sorry about that." I decided to exit my thoughts for a moment and focused on my task. " Welcome to Shining Star Hotel and Resort..."

(Lunch time...)

Lunch time....

Kazumi instructed me to go to the resort side for lunch. Since that's where most of the upperclassmen were apparently eating. This is my chance to not only consume a sufficient amount of food, but to also start on my ' survey' among the them. I hope to encounter Nagumo Miyabi there.

I walked to the place.....and....

" Look....it's him."

" He doesn't look so bad..."

" He looks attractive in all honesty..."

A few girls said that.

" So this is the first year hotshot along with Ichinose?"

" But his class.....didn't his class end up with -600 points?"

" That's pitiful...."

Some boys also commented with sympathetic tones.

Well, in any case, none of their comments matter.

What matters is the fact that all the upperclassmen in the area were collectively staring at me. Whispering about me. It seems news of me and Ichinose reached them before.

" Oh, there you are, Ayanokoji-kun!" A familiar voice called out to me and I turned to the food table where I saw Ichinose waving at me.

I quickly made my way towards her, ignoring the stares of others.

" Come! The food looks so good!" Ichinose said with excitement as she handed me a plate and utensils. " I haven't tried British food but this is my chance. So I'm really going to savor it."

" I see." I looked towards the selection.

It definitely looked luxurious thanks to the quality of this establishment. So it's obviously going to taste wonderful from the source alone. I took a few small sandwiches, sausage rolls, 4 mini quiches, wellington beef, and a few more savory food along the way.....and to top it all off.....I took a bowl of ice cream with jelly.

" Let's sit over there, Ayanokoji-kun." Ichinose gazes towards a lone table...

Wait...no....there was someone occupying it.

" There's someone there, Ichinose-"

" I know! But let's just go with it!" She cheered and made her way towards that table with her plate of food. I sighed and followed her with my own plate of food.

As we got closer to the table, I began making out the features of the student sitting there. It was a girl, she looked petite, and she had purple hair tied into two buns on each side. She looked bland as she slowly ate her food. Seemingly engrossed in her own thoughts.

" Hello, senpai!" Ichinose greets, jolting the purple haired girl in surprise.

" Um, sorry! I didn't mean to startle you." She quickly apologizes, " We're your kouhais. I'm Ichinose and this is Ayanokoji." She introduces us both.

"....Oh. I know you two." The purple haired girl sighs. " Do you two need something from me?" She asks.

" Um, is it okay if we sit here?" Ichinose asked.

" But aren't there free tables over there on that side?" She points to the other side where there was indeed a free table. " In fact, you two were supposed to be seated there since that's the first year batch section." She said.

" Oh...really? Ahaha! I didn't know!" Ichinose smiles apologetically. She most definitely knew, which makes me wonder what's her true intentions on picking this table.

" But I want to get to know you, senpai." Ichinose said.

" Hm?" Our ' senpai' narrowed her eyes at us.

" Ichinose wants to get along with her seniors. " I decided to speak. " I, too, wish to know. After all, we are here to survey for a week, supposedly."

" Oh.....well....I guess that's understandable." The girl nods. " Okay then, you two may sit. A proper senpai should always welcome their kouhais." She gives us a small smile.

" Thank you." I said.

" Thank you!" Ichinose said.

We took our seats.

" Itadakimasu." Both Ichinose and I said before eating our meal.

" Hey, senpai. You never told us your name." Ichinose said after a moment. " May we know your name?" She asked.

" Oh...right." The senpai coughs awkwardly. " My name is **Tachibana Akane.**" she said.

Tachibana Akane....

My eyes slowly gazed at Tachibana with interest. Something feels off.

" Tachibana-senpai. Pleasure to meet you." Ichinose said.

" Same here, Ichinose-san. Ayanokoji-kun." She responded kindly.

" Well then! Now that introductions are officially over.....there's actually a question I want to ask you." Ichinose said with smile I'm familiar with.

" What is it?" Tachibana asked, curiously.

" Tachibana-senpai, are you a second year? or are you a third year?" She asked.

" Me? Well, I'm a third year-" Tachibana was about to respond until I interrupt her,

" You're a fourth year, aren't you?"

I stared at her with a serious expression. I hear Ichinose giggling beside me and muttering, " I knew you'd understand~"

"...." Tachibana wore a frozen expression. She was in disbelief and she didn't know how to respond. But that was all the confirmation we needed.

I see. So this is why Ichinose chose this table. Isn't it weird that this 'senpai' is sitting alone, isolated from everyone else? Not only that, but when Tachibana mentioned the first year batch section, I immediately began to search for the other years sections. I managed to spot the second year, which was completely occupied, and the empty third year section which is mysteriously left like a desert....

And then we have Tachibana....who is seated on a table far away from the aforementioned sections.

Ichinose noticed this detail faster than me since she arrived earlier. She fully intended to come here, but waited for my arrival.

" W-What are you talking about?" Tachibana asked with a nervous smile.

" Please don't lie to us, Senpai. It's useless~" Ichinose singsonged.
" You made things way too obvious for yourself!" she said.

"Tsk." Tachibana's facade cracked. Her smile drops and she wore an annoyed expression.

" Fine....I give up." She sighs heavily.

" Think of this as a survey, senpai. I have a few other questions I'd like to ask and you're free to ignore or answer truthfully! No pressure, really. " Ichinose said in a fake reassuring tone.

Tachibana glares at her. " Make it quick."

" All right!" Ichinose pulls out a notepad from her pocket and a pen. She began writing down something.

" Question 1. We were told that we would only spend 3 years at this school and yet, an anomaly has been discovered! A **fourth year**. That's you. Why is that? Why is there a fourth year here?" Ichinose asked.

" I have unfinished business...." Tachibana answers.

" Ehhh? ' unfinished business'? You sound like a ghost-- wait...*are* you a ghost?" Ichinose asked with wide eyes.

Tachibana sighs, " No. I have unfinished business. I won't say anything more than that.....and please don't assume I'm a ghost ever again."

Ichinose nods and crosses something out on her notepad.

" Question 2. How many fourth years are there? " Ichinose asked.

" I'm the only one fourth year." Tachibana's answer suprised me. Ichinose also raised a brow in response to that.

" The only fourth year? What about the rest?" Ichinose asked.

Tachibana doesn't answer. Leaving it to us for interpretation.

Either they chose to leave when their three years were over while Tachibana chose to stay for whatever reason....or they all perished except for Tachibana who nonetheless stayed for whatever reason.

Seeing that Tachibana wasn't going to elaborate further on her answer from the Question 2 . Ichinose quickly proceeded to Question 3.

" Question 3. Where are the third years?" She asked.

" I don't know...." Tachibana said.

" You don't know?" Ichinose asked.

"Well, I know where a few of them are." Tachibana said.

" Really? Would you mind telling us?" Ichinose asked.

" I only know where 5 of them are." Tachibana says as she holds up 5 fingers.

Ichinose nods as she eagerly waits for Tachibana's answer....

" One is buried 6 feet under, two were turned to ashes, and the last three were shot and thrown to the ocean..."

"...."

Tachibana places her hand down.

" As for the rest? I don't know." She lets out a laugh. But it wasn't filled with twisted joy, rather it was with sorrow." I wish I *did* know."

"....I see..." Ichinose nods. I glanced to her expression and I saw a smirk threatening to reveal itself on her lips. How twisted.

" I'm sorry...if it was....uncomfortable to answer, Senpai. But I did say you had the choice to say nothing-"

" It's all right. I oughta be honest with you right now because it's important. After all, you two are well-aware of the devil that runs these games. And so, you must be aware that none of this is a joke." Tachibana looked at us with dull eyes.

" We're playing these games to win. To survive. That's all that matters for everyone here." She said.

" If that's the case, then why did you choose to stay?" I blurted out.

" As I said..." Tachibana leans back on her seat, " I have unfinished business."

Unfinished business, huh....

I have a guess regarding that....

I hear scribbling from Ichinose's end. Seems like she's written something on her notepad. She turns to me and smiles before

showing me its content.

' **Your turn.**' it said.

ichinose stood up from her seat with her empty plate. She ate that quick?

" Thank you for answering my questions, senpai." Ichinose bows in gratitude, " I'll take your advice to heart. I will take my leave now."

" Mm..." Tachibana nods.

Ichinose takes her leave but not without sending me one last glance.

.....

.....

.....

" Why are you still here? You have questions too?" Tachibana

broke the silence between us.

" Why, yes. " I said. " I actually do have a few questions."

" Ask away. Get it over with." She said.

" Do you know **Horikita Manabu**? "

Bam!

I felt the table shook as Tachibana had slammed her hands down on it as she stood up from her seat, staring at me with a look that could kill.

" How do you know that name." She asked.

" Director Lumine mentioned it. Do you know him?" I asked again.

"....Yes. I do." Her eyes soften. " But if you know his name, then you are aware you're asking the information of a dead student-"

" Then can you tell me about **Nagumo Miyabi**? The student who supposedly betrayed Horikita Manabu?" I asked.

"...." Tachibana's eyes sharpen at me again. Her composure is gone. The look in her eyes were definitely familiar to me because another student earlier in the month, had previously adorned the same gaze....the same anger.

She lifts her hands off the table and begins to push back her chair in the table. She walks to the side. She intended to leave but before she could get out of range, I spoke once more.

" Horikita Manabu seems important to you, judging by your reaction. And you seem to blame Nagumo for all of it too. " I started. I hear her footsteps stop.

I continued,

" What were you to him? Were you an ally? A classmate? A friend? or....could it be...." I turned to her.

" **That you were his lover?**"

Her shoulders shook as soon as those words left my mouth. So I was right.

" I see.....so that's your unfinished business then?" I asked and waited for her move.

She finally turns to me. She wore a look of contempt aimed directly towards me. She must be irritated on how easily I saw through her mask. She marches towards me until she was inches away from me.

" You better shut up now, Ayanokoji. Run your mouth off elsewhere." She spoke with venom.

But I didn't back down. " Oh my, did I hit a nerve? I apologize." I said.

" You-"

" I don't know the exact amount of pain and contempt you are currently feeling ever since his death, But there's someone in this school whose anger and sorrow you can never compare to." I cut her off.

She stayed silent. She looked curious as to who I'm referring to.

" Horikita Suzune. His younger sister." I said.

She gasps. " Suzune.....h-his sister....she's here?" She stuttered. Sympathy began showing in her gaze.

" She's here. And the moment the director told her about Manabu's death, she broke down. Like a dam full of tears was suddenly leaking non-stop. But once her sadness was drained, it was quickly replaced with anger...." I got up my chair and my figure towered over Tachibana's.

I looked deep into her peach brown eyes.

" Her eyes were filled with a certain spark of revenge. When she began suspecting the person I am, she begged for me to assist her in achieving revenge for her brother. By killing the very man who betrayed him, Nagumo Miyabi." I said.

"....You...."

" You have the same eyes as her, Tachibana. That's why you stayed. You want to get revenge for him, but let me ask you this; *Do you have the **resolve**?*" I asked.

The definition of ' Resolve' is to decide firmly on a course of action. Firm determination to achieve it no matter what the cost.

".....Of course I do." She says, " I chose to stay because I'm not going to give up until he's dead." she said.

She stares back into my eyes with that same fire.

" Heed my warning; **Do not trust Nagumo.** " Her words were heavy....

" You've pissed me off enough. I'm taking my leave now." she scoffed at me before turning around once more and leaving....

but she stopped again....

" *Tell Horikita Suzune....that she has my condolences.*" Was all she said before leaving.

She says that, but there was a hidden meaning behind her tone. ' Tell Horikita Suzune....that I will make sure Nagumo pays with his life' is what she wanted to really say. How troublesome. I couldn't gain much information out of her due to her troublesome emotional turmoil, much like Horikita's. If I decided to push it further, then maybe I could've squeezed a bit out of her....

But it's more likely that she wouldn't break under such simple methods. She definitely has resolve.

I sigh to myself and sat back down.

My foods getting cold...I'd better hurry up and finish....and then use the extra time to search for Nagumo....

(9 pm....)

Zero appearances....

Nagumo Miyabi....I wasn't able to find him at all. After I had finished my lunch, I began asking a few students that were the same year as him, but they kept deflecting my question with something entirely different.

Were they ordered to not reveal anything about him?

After that, I continued my front desk duties the whole afternoon and not once did I see Nagumo loitering around in the lobby or just passing by really. Zero appearance. I even called Ichinose to ask if she knew anything about his location since she was housekeeping duty at the time....but she says she doesn't know where he is or anything about him either.

I wasn't sure if she was lying or whatever, but either way, it didn't change my situation.

Now I'm sitting on a stool, eating a banana in my kitchen counter. Yep, this is my coping mechanism ladies and gentleman. Stress eating. Well...I don't necessarily feel stressed out about it as much as I thought... so it might just be me being a glutton and hiding it behind the reason of 'feeling stressed out'.

Well, perhaps I didn't achieve what I really wanted today. But I did find an interesting 'fourth year', Tachibana Akane. It was something I didn't expect. I mean the possibility of choosing to stay in this hell never came to mind, because who in their right mind would extend their stay in a death situation run by a literal psychopath who could destroy you at any time?

Even if it's for a lover.....you could always find a new one, right? Or maybe it's not that easy as I'd initially thought...

Love is foreign to me. I've read about it, I've read how people would act because of it, but I find it hard to believe that such a

joyful emotion could blind their logic and can cause great consequence....but perhaps that's why 'Love' is also a weapon.

Perhaps one day....I will be able to understand it more and use it to my advantage.....

" Haah....I better get some rest now. Get some energy for tomorrow." I said to myself as I washed my hands.

i made my way towards my bed, ready to hit the sack. Until my phone suddenly began ringing.

I went to it and I saw an unknown number popping up on the screen.

Who could it be...?

I narrowed my eyes as I quickly answered the call and put it close to my ear.

" Hello?" I said.

"...."

My eyes widened.

This voice....

I've never heard of it before, but I knew exactly who the other person was on the other side of the line. Even if the voice is unfamiliar to me, my instincts were flaring up with red warnings. This voice.....it belongs to....

" Sure, **Nagumo-senpai**. I'll be there soon."

Nagumo Miyabi....

So you were searching for me as well...

CHAPTER END!

.....Not even gonna say anything...

**I am indeed a clown for violating my own promise again.
Fuck.**

**The cote season 2 trailer just added more hype to my own
hype in writing Nagumo and Kiyoko's interactions in this
fic.....ugh....the timing.**

I couldn't help myself....

**Also, in regards to the sudden developments that appeared
in my life that I mentioned back when I first announced that
I'd be taking a two week break...**

**I, KawaiiLumine, am now engaged in a romantic relationship
with an actual human being!**

Anyways, that's all!

I'm probably gonna clown myself again and write another

new chapter but at this point imma just accept it.

I'm a slave to wattpad.

KawaiiLumine, out!

S2. Episode 3: Nagumo Miyabi.

Ayanokoji PoV

I called down the elevator and waited for its arrival to my floor. I took this time to think about what Horikita might be doing. Is she following my orders? She most likely is, but knowing her, she's confused with my true intentions.

Someone like Horikita cannot seem to figure out a good outcome with my ' plan'. To most people, it definitely sounds stupid to have a not-so-prepared individual take on the mantle while its true leader is gone. But in order to counter that con, that's where Kushida's close relationship with Horikita begins bearing fruit. Kushida may not be as smart as Horikita, she might not be capable of devising any major plans like Horikita (in certain circumstances) but she has a more open mind towards things. Something that Horikita is yet to possess.

Since Kushida is familiar with my way of doing things...even more so than Horikita....then she's very likely to suggest a few things to Horikita that will surely make the latter realize something. That's right....

I gave you two the foundation.

It's your job to build off from it now.

At least, until I return. I initially planned to unravel the minds of certain students myself and then mold them into better versions of themselves but this sudden trip to London placed a slight setback. Perhaps Class D's comeback might take a while unless Ichinose commits a big mistake somewhere down the line. But despite the setback, things are still going to end up the way I want it to. I'm confident that at this very moment, Horikita knows what to do and will actively achieve her interpretation of my plan no matter the method. She also has Kushida as a loyal companion to see through it all the way.

But....in the case that things don't work out....

Then....I'll just have to-

Ding!

The elevator sounded and the doors opened for me. I straightened my posture and walked inside, I pressed the 70th floor on the control panel and soon the elevator doors closed. Once again, I wait in silence as I watched the floor indicator going up to the floor I intend to step out.

So Nagumo Miyabi stays at the 70th floor....

Was it assigned for him? Or was it something that he paid for. Taking that into account, it makes me wonder where most of the upperclassmen reside in. Do they stay in the hotel like Nagumo? Or do they stay at the resort section? Maybe they were divided equally so that half lives in the hotel and half lives in the resort.

Ugh, what's the point. I'm overthinking this too much.

It's a nasty habit of mine but I can't help it. It's helped me for so long but in situations like these. it's kind of annoying to think about sometimes.

I finally arrived at his door. Room 710.

I knocked on his door a couple of times.

.....

Is he even in there?

I furrowed my brows slightly. He told me to meet him inside this room but so far, I did not hear a single noise from the inside nor did the door open. I began knocking again.

Still no response.

I was just about ready to knock on the door once more until I heard small *click!* from the door lock, and soon the door opened slightly. I placed my hand on the knob and slowly began opening it.

" Nagumo-senpai?" I called out.

" Please come in. I apologize for the wait." I hear him speak softly but firm all the way inside the room.

I fully opened the door and stepped inside the luxurious hotel apartment. Most of the lights were off with exception of the single lit room which came from the living room. I closed the door and another click was heard from its lock. So it's an automatic lock.

Before I could take another step towards the living room, I stood still on my spot as my eyes focused on the person who stepped out of the corner. Blonde hair, blue eyes, and a calm calculating expression on his face.....

And also.....

" Why are you shirtless?" I asked.

Yep, he was completely shirtless and I immediately took note of

his body. He was fit, at the least. He only had joggers on.

" This is how I sleep." He replied and tilts his head at me, " Do you have a problem with it?"

" No. But isn't it weird for you to be shirtless when it comes to meeting a new face? " I shot back.

" I suppose, so. But I still don't understand your concern. We're both men, so I hardly think there's any problem with me being shirtless around you.....unless....." He places a finger under his chin, his blue eyes narrowing at me.

" You swing the other way?"

" No." I quickly denied.

" Ah, then there's no problem, yes?" He said before beckoning me over, " Come, let's discuss in the living room."

I nodded and made my way towards him. Already, he's given me the impression that of a strange individual who has no problem whatsoever being shirtless around strangers. Does he really not care regardless of who enters his room? He called me beforehand, and normal people would dress up decently in the presence of new visitors.....however he doesn't seem to replicate that type of common sense.

At any rate, I'm not particularly bothered by it. I was just suprised.

I entered the dimly lit living room. The only light sources was from one single big lamp standing by the side. There was also a balcony where you could see the city view. I turned to Nagumo, who was seated on the chair crosslegged and pouring a cup of tea.

Wordlessly, I took my seat on the chair opposite of him. Between us was a table with the tea set.

He looks towards me, tea cup on a plate in hand as he offers it to me.

" Tea?" He said.

I took on his offer and accepted the tea. " Thank you." I said

before taking a sip.

Hm....quite nice.

" It's Earl Grey Tea. It's famous in England and it's quite relaxing to drink especially in the night or the middle of the day. Don't you agree?" He asked me.

" Yeah. It has a nice taste too. " I agreed.

Nagumo nods, taking his own cup of tea in hand, and proceeding to sip from it. As I drank my cup of tea, my eyes couldn't leave Nagumo's face. I was trying to discern any of his possible intentions in calling me here to ' discuss' something. I hoped it wouldn't be trouble, but I have to be prepared for anything.

I placed my tea cup down and coincidentally, Nagumo was also just finished with his. We both placed our cups back on the small table between us.

" Nagumo-senpai, why did you call me here-"

" Miyabi."

" Huh?" I was caught off guard. He said that so suddenly.

His blue eyes locked with mine as he began to repeat what he just said,

" Please, call me Miyabi and drop any honorifics. " He requested, " I will do the same and refer to you as Kiyotaka."

" How sudden," I raised a brow. This guy was strange. " You immediately assume that I'll be okay with that arrangement?"

" If you're not okay with it. Please tell me." He said.

Once again, I was not against such a notion but the way he brought it up just caught me off guard. What's with this guy? Is this his strategy? The art of surprise?

" No. I'm not against it..." I said, " Sure, if you're really fine with it, Miyabi. " I decided to go with the flow for now.

He nods. " The reason why I want us to refer each other in first-name basis, is because I want to work with you, Kiyotaka."

....

" Work with me?" I questioned.

" Yes. I'd like for you to become my ally, unilaterally, I will also become *your* ally." He said.

So he wants an alliance....

Unfortunately, I don't plan to cooperate with you, Nagumo. You're too much of an unknown factor to me, and while getting close seems like the most optimal choice in determining whether you will be a threat in the future or not. At this time, I don't think it's worth it. Especially when I'm in the upperclassmens turf....or rather, Nagumo's domain. If I make any mistakes here, then I'll surely suffer its consequences and it'll become a bigger setback for my goals.

He might betray and attack my class...depleting us of our points. That's something I can't risk, especially in the situation we are in.

I feigned regret, " I'm sorry Miyabi. But working with you sounds completely risky. Working with you involves my class and you clearly have the upper hand in case a situation arises where you will inevitably to knock us down-"

" Your class? When did I say anything about involving your class?" He interrupted.

Hm?

" It seems to me that you misunderstood what I said, Kiyotaka." He says, " In that case, allow me to repeat and make it clear for the both of us."

" I wish for **you**, alone, to become my ally. And I will do the same and I, **alone**, will become your ally." He said.

I see...

So this is what he meant. He wishes for an alliance between two individuals, him and I. Our classes will not necessarily be involved since this is between us....or until a situation arises in which classes HAVE to get involved but other than that.....

" So you wish for an alliance between us two?" I asked.

" That is correct. I will help you in whichever thing you need help

on, but naturally, I expect the same from your end by helping me with my problems." He said.

" Why me?" I crossed my arms and narrowed my eyes at him, " Why are you proposing such an offer to me?"

" Because I believe you're the most capable person in your year." He replied.

" How do you know that? Have you seen everything I can do?" I challenged.

" No, but even so, doesn't it bring up the question of things you *can't* do? " He returned the favor. " I feel as though I haven't even scratched the surface of your abilities, Kiyotaka. And I wish to find out what that is.....but...."

He reaches for the tea pot and pours another cup of tea for himself and for me.

" As much as possible, I do not wish to become your enemy. " He says as he offers the cup to me once more. " And be on the receiving end of your attacks."

" I will not stand in your way. Nor will you stand in mine. I want to create an alliance in order to prevent future threats against our respective sides. We can work together." He says. " We can achieve

our goals together."

I accepted the cup of tea into my palms, " You do not wish for me to become your enemy? You say that, and yet you know nothing of the person I am. You have no basis. Is this paranoia? Is this....**fear**?" I asked.

" Fear?....Haha....." He chuckles. " Hahahahaha!" He laughs to himself.

" Fear? I don't think so." His smile fades just as quickly after his laughter ends. " I simply wish to go through these games as smoothly as possible. And working with you, will benefit me greatly....and it will also benefit you, Kiyotaka."

" Nagumo-"

" Miyabi, remember? We're going on first name basis." He reminded me.

" Right....Miyabi...." I took a small sip from my tea before looking at him once more,

" You're quite persistent in having me work with you. You seem to want this alliance to work and to be agreed upon. But I have a few questions I want to ask."

" If I answer, will you agree to my proposal?" He asked.

After hearing those words, I was then reminded of a similar situation that happened early in the second month. Back at the first game, I was suprised to see the Director in my room waiting for me. She danced with fire as she ran her mouth off with my past at stake. Eventually, I had to negotiate a bit with her regarding a few questions I needed answered in order to win the fist game as quickly as possible.

I wanted to ask her two questions. She countered by saying if she were to answer truthfully, then I will do my best to meet her expectations and ' try' to win.

This situation is exactly that. However, I don't plan to follow Nagumo's flow to such an extent.

" I'll think about it." I said.

" Very well. Ask away." He gestures me to continue.

" All right." I proceeded to my first question....

" Why did you betray Horikita Manabu? The betrayal, in which led to his death." I asked him and I took note of his reaction....

" It's because Horikita Manabu was a despicable man." He calmly answered.

" Why do you say that?" I expected such an answer....but I didn't expect the hidden tone of venom behind his calm composure.

" Have you wondered where the third years went? I'm sure you have, back at the lunch buffet at the resort, yes?" He decided to ask me.

Ah, I recall Tachibana answering that question. She only told us of the six that perished but the rest were left unknown.

" Yes. In fact, Tachibana Akane told me about the six that died and their causes of death. The rest were unknown to her." I replied.

His brow lifted for a moment in surprise but it quickly returned to its previous expression.

" I see. So you already met up with Tachibana-senpai..." He said. I nod.

" She told you of the six that died but she didn't tell you about the person behind those deaths?" He asked.

" No. I do not recall." I shook my head.

" That's to be expected.....since she wasn't there to witness everything." He looks down to his tea cup.

Witness everything...

" And you were?" I asked.

" Of course. "

" What happened?"

" "

Nagumo sighs and his face looked bitter. A complete contrast to how he looked before wherein he was calm and collected but now....I see nothing but hatred and anger exuding from him.

" Horikita Manabu....was ready to sacrifice those around him."

" He lied to everyone around him. He made a deal with that wicked woman and agreed to sacrifice everyone around him to gain freedom. Desplicable. "

I watched Nagumo clasping his hands together. It was a method to contain his anger from leaking too much as he continued speaking.

" I trusted him. Everyone around me trusted him. And that man used our trust to provide him the chance of freeing himself at the very last moment....." He said.

That doesn't make sense....something doesn't add up.

" But when you betrayed him. Wasn't it during his last game? All he needed to do was to pull through with that final game and he would've been free, right?" I asked.

Nagumo lifts his head to look at me.

" Final game? Is that what the director told you?" He asked.

Could he be suggesting that it isn't?

" Yes....that's what she told my class." I said.

"Well, she isn't lying. " Nagumo sighs. " Horikita Manabu just needed to pull through with that one game. The game between him and the director. The game that would've guaranteed his freedom if I hadn't intervened."

" Are you trying to tell me that there were more games beyond that one?" I asked.

" Exactly." He nods. " It wasn't the final game for us. It was only **his** final game. A game he lost because I didn't allow him to win. I would never let such a despicable man win while everyone else becomes his sacrifice."

In the end.....just when I thought Lumine had lied. She didn't. But she did lie indirectly but it isn't enough to say that she wasn't telling the truth. She played with her words.

Still, I wonder if Nagumo is the one who's lying here....

" Heed my warning: Do not trust Nagumo."

That's what Tachibana told me. I don't trust Nagumo, not one bit, but whether or not he's currently lying to me is a different matter. He looks genuinely hateful of Horikita Manabu, which backs up his story.....

Or he's just that good at acting. But then Asahina-senpai's words echoes in my memory...

" I wonder....was the trust mutual?" Were her words.

Her words now begins to make sense after Nagumo's side of the story in which he paints Manabu as a despicable man who was ready to sacrifice everyone's lives. It suggests that Nagumo's trust for Manabu shattered at the very last moment.....or.....rather, it suggests that Manabu never reciprocated the same trust Nagumo had for him. Thus, making it not mutual.

But then that also introduces the possibility in which Nagumo is

lying to me right now, and that he had never had any trust for Manabu in the place. If this possibility is the true reality, then things will take a different turn, it will pain Nagumo as the true despicable person who lies about a dead man and killed him in cold blood.

" I never thought Horikita Manabu would do such a thing.....after all, his sister speaks of him in high regards." I said.

Nagumo's eyes widened. "His sister.....are you talking about Suzune?"

So he knows as well. This suggests that perhaps Manabu spoke fondly of his sister during his stay here, or at the very least, he'd at least mentioned her name in conversation.

" Yes." I said.

"Then...." Nagumo chuckles. " I suppose she hates me, right?"

" Very much. In fact, she plans to kill you once she finds you." I spoke bluntly.

" ' Kill me', huh....." His amusement dissipates. " How unfortunate....."

" I don't plan to die. Not yet." He clenches his fist.

" You seem determined..." I noted.

" I have a goal here. A goal I want to see realized, and I refuse to die until it happens." He spoke, his tone going from soft to strong.

" And that goal? What is it?" I asked. I wanted to extract as much information of his character from the source itself as much as possible.

" That's.....a story for another time." Nagumo said.

" I asked you a question. Didn't you agree to answer?" I challenged.

" Yes, I recall it. But I do not wish to answer yet." He said.

" Then I suppose your proposal for an alliance is rejected." I sighed and stood up. I felt just about ready to leave. I already got the information most important right now.

" I suppose so.....but before you go. You're free to ask more questions, Kiyotaka." He suddenly halted me with his words.

Hm? He's still going with it....even after the proposal is rejected.

I turned to glance at him. " Are you sure? You'll get nothing from it. And I won't answer any questions you might ask about me-"

" The thing is, I never planned to ask you any questions in the first place, Kiyotaka. While I may not know of your true capabilities, I am aware of it to a certain extent, namely from your first game." He explains, " You won through the secret route just as I had predicted."

" You predicted the traitor would win through that method?" I ask.

" Yes." He pours another cup of tea for himself, " And when you did. That's when I took interest in you."

" Shouldn't you be more interested in a student like Ichinose Honami? Who led her class to new heights by the end of the second game?" I asked, curiously.

" She's a disgusting person. Absolutely repulsive. The look in her eyes.....she enjoys seeing other suffer.....just like that devil Director.
" He spoke, completely disinterested at the mention of Ichinose.

" I do not wish to involve myself with people like that." He added.

So he can also see through her mask.....it must be due to his far longer experience of being a student here. He must have taken note of Director Lumine's psychotic behaviour and managed to match it with Ichinose's true face. And to add salt to the wound, he experienced near-betrayal first hand from Horikita Manabu, a man he deeply trusted.

But the latter....it's still skeptical for me to really define it as ' truth'.

" And what of me? What's your impression of me?" I asked.

" You're.....different. " He replied. " I say that you're a very neutral person. You don't act on things that don't require your interference.....you don't operate under someone's orders unless necessary. And you want to be free from all your chains. That's what I think."

He's almost accurate...

Almost.

" But....defining you as a 'neutral' person doesn't fit right either.....I have more to say." He said.

More to say?

" Could you get my deck of cards from that drawer over there?" He suddenly asked as he began pointing to said drawer.

He was gaining my interest, so I nodded along and did as he said. I went to the drawer and pulled out his card deck neatly sealed in a pack. I went back to Nagumo and handed him the pack.

" Thank you..." He softly said. He began opening the pack and the card stack plopped on his hands.

" What are you planning to do? " I asked.

He didn't answer.

Instead, he began shuffling the cards. I watched as he shuffled them like an expert dealer...equal to that of those from casinos. Were we going to play cards or something? I don't particularly specialize in that area since I never played before but I can learn. Though, I doubt that's his intention.

Nagumo Miyabi is strange, after all.

Finally, he stopped, and the cards were flipped on their backs. He held them in front of me, refusing to reveal any of the cards symbols.

" Pick a card." He said.

A magic trick?

" It's not a magic trick." He predicted my thoughts, " Have you ever heard of Cartomancy?" He asked.

" Ah, Cartomancy. Isn't that basically card reading? Similar to that of tarot cards used by fortune tellers or the so-called psychic. " They're usually a scam.

" Correct, " He says. " I'm confident that you will pick a card that shapes my full impression of you."

" Is that so..." I said as my eyes lowered towards the deck of cards he was holding.....

I lift my hand and touched the cards, gliding across them, until I eventually stopped my movements and slowly pulled out one of the cards from his hand.

I held the card but I hadn't revealed it yet.

Nagumo nods. " Flip it over." He said.

I flipped it over and...

" King of spades." I said and looked at Nagumo, " I've heard of Cartomancy but I never bothered to learn it. I think fortune-telling in general through cards or any other psychic item manifestation are complete scams." I told him.

He chuckles, " I share the same sentiment. But you see, I've gotten quite good with cartomancy to the point where I'm more accurate

about a person's true nature through a simple card deck." He says.

Is that so....

" Then, what does the king of spades represent?" I asked. He said

Wordlessly, Nagumo laid out all the cards with spades on the small table.

" In cartomancy, cards of spades are associated with misfortune and other negative aspects. For example, the Ace of Spades represent bad endings, 2 of Spades represent tough decisions and change, 3 of spades represent trouble in relationships and so on and so forth....." He explained.

" And your card.....the King of Spades....." he slowly looks to me with an unreadable gaze.

" It represents the King of Deceit."

The air suddenly turned cold.

" Deceit....huh....." I said, " So you perceive me as someone deceitful?" I asked him.

He nods. " You deceive others' perception of you. And you use others for your own benefit." he said.

" So in that regard.....I'm just like Manabu to you?"

" No. Not completely." He shakes his head, " While I may think of you as someone deceitful. I also think that you're still a neutral individual who doesn't know which side of himself to choose. Will you choose to change for the better? Or become a much worse person than you already are at nature."

" If you think of me as someone neutral. Then shouldn't Manabu receive the same consideration? What if he wanted to be free so he could see his sister again-"

" No. That's wishful thinking, Kiyotaka. If you were present at the time I saw it with my own eyes.....then you will also see him the way I do. He had to die." He interrupts, sounding bitter for another moment.

But his composure quickly returned.

" Anyways.....there is more for me to tell about the King of Spades. It's much more complex than you think." He said.

It's clear to me that Nagumo firmly believes Manabu to be the worst person possible. But within his blue eyes, I see the slightest spark of remorse, after all, he just killed a man. That's something that will haunt you until you die.

But I respect it.

Nagumo Miyabi has **resolve**.

" Go on." I said.

" The King of Spades is the King of Deceit. We made that clear. You deceive others but....you also tend to deceive *yourself*." He said.

Oh?

" That's when the card gives a whole different meaning. One who deceives oneself to become someone else. A person they're not. A

person that's against their nature. They repeatedly deceive themselves everyday, hoping that someday, what was once a lie will become a truth....and then they will have been truly reborn...." He said.

"..."

" In other words..." He looks to me. " The reason I believe you are different, is because you do both at the same time. There is still something within you that's desperately trying to fight your nature. Something within you that wants to change but....the situation we are in....this school.....makes it a hard battle. A Tug of War." he said.

" I see...." I was amused. He was definitely closer to understanding the type of person I am than most. I am beyond impressed and I'm excited to see what other tricks he has up his sleeve if ever I am able to spectate how he operates in death games.

" I'm satisfied for now, Miyabi. You've definitely caught my interest." I spoke.

" But...your proposal of an alliance remains rejected. There is no doubt that in the future, you and I will have to clash. Our classes will get involved. " He said.

" It seems that way....but....I'll be ready for that." He shoots back, " As I said before, I'm not ready to die. I will see through my goal."

Resolve...

A rare feeling suddenly incited within me once his words registered. I felt my lips forming a small smile. Enemy or Not, Nagumo Miyabi is now someone that deserves my respect. He's ready to lose some games to win the war. He's ready to win more games to realize his dream. Whatever it is.

He's a man who's ready to die for it.....but he intends to live through it.

" And one more thing, I am not the leader of one class." He suddenly adds, but I already knew.

" I know. Throughout this conversation, I already knew the type of power you hold. If I were to fight you, then it's not going to be an easy battle.....**because you have your entire year under your command.**" I stated.

Nagumo's expression shifted. A smile appears on his lips as well as he laughs.

" Yes, that's right." he said. " But even so, I do not wish to be your enemy.....but if there's no other choice, then expect me to fight viciously." He said.

" No mercy from my senpai? I see, then I will not hesitate to return the favor." I mused.

He nods, still keeping that rarity of a smile.

I placed my card back on his deck.

" It was a nice talk, Miyabi." I said, " But I better return to my room. I have a long day ahead of me tomorrow."

" Very well. I also feel the same about our talk, it felt nice. Even if it was me talking to an unknown force like you, it was still enjoyable regardless. Have a good sleep, Kiyotaka." He waves.

I nod.

Nagumo-....no, I'd better stop referring to him as that.

Miyabi is definitely the most interesting individual yet. I look forward to one day squaring against him in a battle of wits or physical ability. But it doesn't negate my true goal in this school and that is to achieve **freedom**....and achieve **change**.

I opened the door and exited his room, making my way to the elevator.

King of Spades....

The King of Deceit....

To deceive others...

And to deceive myself....

*To form a better **truth** for myself....*

Who knew such a simple card could come close to describing the person I am...

But not the person I **was**.

CHAPTER END!

Ngl, I felt BL vibes from writing Nagumo and Kiyo's interaction in this chapter. Like I was so tempted for some odd reason to add romantic/sexual tension in one of these dialogues....

Ig that's my ship for this fic? Jk.

I hope you enjoyed this episode dedicated to their interaction!

Also I'm no 100% accurate with my Cartomancy since I added my own interpretation to them. So don't compare it with google search lmao.

Anyways, see you in next episode!

KawaiiLumine, out~

S2. Episode 4: Everybody hates you, Horikita

Kushida PoV

I was currently following Suzune-chan, shortly after the failed study session. She seemed to be in a rush.....I wonder what she has planned. Her ' interpretation' of Ayanokoji-kun's intentions sounds interesting.

" What are you going to do?" I asked Suzune-chan as we walked towards the gymnasium.

" First, we're going to convince Sudo-kun first." She said.

Sudo-kun? But don't you have the worst relationship with him among the rest in our group???

" But how do you know Sudo-kun would come to the gym?" I asked.

" He likes basketball, right? That's the only thing that goes through his head, correct?" She asked.

" Well. yes-"

" Then for players like him, the best way to clear out frustration is through basketball. I'm 100% certain that he's definitely venting his frustrations through basketball in the gymnasium." She said and began picking up the pace.

I quickly tried to catch up to her.

What she said makes perfect sense....I hope she's right...

" Ah but, Suzune-chan?"

" Hm?"

" What's with this bag?" I asked as I presented the bag she told me to hold for now but to not take a peek.

" A contingency plan." She says.

" Eh?" A contingency plan within this very bag? Aww, I'm so curious to find out but I shan't take a peek!

But....I wonder what it is....

Suzune opened the door to the gymnasium and we quickly entered. Soon after that, we both began to hear loud repeating thumping with a high pitch after-effect. We also heard constant squeaking from the floor derived from the movement of Sudo-kun's feet.

We finally entered the gymnasium properly and were greeted by bright lights and one lone student with red hair, dribbling the basketball towards the hoop. Small cones were set up on the court as he began dribbling left to right across them, I assume it's a basketball drill or something.

I looked to Suzune and she also looked at me and put up a finger, telling me to stay silent. I nodded and went back to looking at Sudo-kun. After he passed all the cones with speed and precision, he quickly proceeded towards the hoop and his dribbling of the ball gets louder and louder.

His look was fierce as he eyes the hoop.

So cool....

Such intensity! I was never a religious watcher of sports, so naturally I underestimated its intensity. But what makes this even more surprising is the fact that it's just Sudo-kun venting everything through basketball practice alone. I can't even begin to imagine what he's like in a real game with the same pent up energy....

Sudo-kun was nearing the hoop.

He held the ball with one hand as soon as he got close.

1 step...

2 step.....

3 step- wait no, he jumps!

SLAM! He slams the ball through the hoop. Its loud sound echoed through the gymnasium and I stood there, watching wide-eyed. The ball already landed on the ground but Sudo continued hanging onto the rim for a few more seconds, as if cooling down after putting all his emotions through that major slam dunk.

He releases a loud exhale before landing on the ground.

He placed his hands on his hips as he began breathing heavily. He must have been practicing hard before we even made the decision to come here. I've just realized the amount of sweat he has on him.

Well, I wonder what happens next-

" So this is where you are. "I hear Suzune say.

Eh? I quickly looked towards my side to see that Suzune was no longer there.

I quickly looked towards the court and saw that Suzune was approaching Sudo-kun with her arms crossed. I began hurrying towards her side, just in case a violent situation escalates between

them.... I will need to intervene and de-escalate as soon as the signs appear.

" Hah?" Sudo turns to look at us, but then he scrunches his brows the moment he notices Suzune. " Oh. It's *you*." He said, sounding annoyed.

" I suggest you use a more polite tone when speaking to me. Otherwise, it just makes you sound like a petty manchild." Suzune says.

Suzune-chan.....please tone down your blunt remarks...

I mentally prayed in my head that this confrontation will end smoothly on a good note.

" Tch." Sudo scoffs, " There you go again with that condescending bitch attitude." He says as he began crossing his arms,

" Seriously, you piss me off. The class forgave you for throwing away our class points during the second game but let me tell you a certain fact. **Everyone hates you.** " He spoke bluntly.

I gasped slightly in shock of his words, but Suzune remained unfazed.....

However, it seems like Sudo-kun had more to say.

" You're stupid to think that any of us really forgive you for being so stupid. And that's coming from an idiot like ME." He points to himself as he said that before placing his hand down to his sides. He then continued,

" Everybody hates you for it. All of it. In fact, I think you were the most useless person in our class, Horikita. You never openly participate in any of our discussions, you threw away class points and caused a fucking panic early in the game, and now you can't even treat our study group with civility. " He says before sighing.

" You're smart, I'll give you that. Yet, you still act like an even worse idiot than me. It's frustrating for everyone." He said.

I decided to speak, " Sudo-kun, that's-"

" Sorry, Kushida. But this is the truth. " He said to me before turning to glare at Suzune,

" Everybody hates this brocon bitch."

The air felt suffocating as those words were uttered. This silence felt so cold to the point where I genuinely couldn't do anything. He meant it. I'm not sure if everyone truly hates Suzune like this.....but Sudo-kun definitely does. He means it.

" Are you done?" Suzune suddenly said.

She sounds so unaffected....

In all honesty, I would break down crying if such things were said about me. It's embarrassing...but it's the truth. I've always been a crybaby at times and Suzune-chan knows that.

That's why....I really admire her strength sometimes....

" Tch. Yeah, I'm done." Sudo says.

" Good. Now, since you've confirmed to have said everything you wanted to say to me. Please join the next study session tomorrow after classes." She said.

Oh no-

" HAH?!" Sudo wore an exasperated look. Absolutely befuddled by Suzune.

" Are you deaf or something? I ain't working with you ever again! I already told you that everyone hates you-"

" So what if everyone hates me? What I did was stupid, that's undeniable. But right now, I want to amend my mistake and gain back the class points and confidence we lost from the previous game. And I can't do it alone." She interrupts.

" I need this group to be a success. It's the only way to lead our class to the best outcome and come out on top from the class average results. We need to ace the midterms." She said. " If we do get the highest class average, then we will be rewarded with 300 class points which will cut down our negatives to half."

"" Sudo seemed to be thinking about Suzune's words. He's hesitant. Suzune was stating the truth, but he's too stubborn to work with Suzune like nothing bad ever happened between them.

I know how this will go.

Sudo-kun....will refuse to submit to someone like Suzune-chan.

" Fine then." Suzune sighs before looking towards me and putting out her hand as if asking for something.

" The bag, Kikyo." She said.

Huh? the bag?

Oh right! The contingency plan!

I quickly handed the bag to Suzune-chan and she nods before turning to Sudo-kun.

" In that case, how about we play a game?" Suzune says.

" A game?" Both Sudo and I said in unison.

What? A game?

" Yes, a game. If I win the game, then you will join my study group again. If I lose, then I'll leave you alone. Sound fair?" Suzune

says.

" Wait hold on!" Sudo puts a hand up as he began narrowing his eyes, " What game are you even talking about? And ' sound fair' ? Bullshit. There's only one game I'm good at and I'm very sure that you're not going to-"

" Basketball." She uttered.

Sudo's eyes widened. Mine too.

B-Basketball?! Is Suzune-chan serious????

" What?" Sudo said, confused and in disbelief. I couldn't blame him.

" You heard me." Suzune says as she begins to pull out something from the bag.....

A pair of basketball shoes?!

" You and me. 1v1. First to 10 wins. If you wish to add any conditions then you're free to do so, so long as they're fair-"

" You can't be serious." Sudo said. " Right?" He turns to me but I didn't know what to really say....

" I'm serious, Sudo-kun. If this is the only way to get you to join our group, then I *will* do it." She said.

" Nah...." Sudo suddenly begins laughing, " SERIOUSLY, YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING! YOU LITERALLY STAND NO CHANCE, HORIKITA! BAHAAHAHAHAHA!" He laughs both mocking and genuine.

" Nah...Nah stop playing with me." Sudo said after regaining a bit of composure, " You're just gonna waste your time. And I don't wanna accidentally hurt a girl just because she can't take a physical drive to the hoop-"

" Are you perhaps intimidated, Sudo-kun?" Suzune challenged.

" Huh." Sudo said in a blank tone.

" Do you refuse such an easy challenge from me?" Suzune tilts her head, " After all, this is the only game you're good at, right? It should be an easy sweep for you and yet.....you're leaning to refusal?" She fake gasps.

" Was everything a front then? Are you perhaps not as good at basketball as I initially thought? Hmm....perhaps you're what they call a **benchwarmer**? Get no minutes?" She says.

Eh?

SUZUNE-CHAN?

" YOU-" Sudo was about to stomp towards her but I quickly got between them with my arms spread out.

" W-wait! Stop saying things like that, Suzune-chan! You know that's not true!" I pleaded to her. " Please apologize...." I wanted to ask Sudo-kun to do the same but I doubt he will comply. But at the very least, Suzune-chan should apologise first to cool Sudo-kun down.

" You're right. Perhaps my words are straying far from the truth." Suzune says in a resigned tone.

I mentally sighed in relief.

" I'm sorry Sudo-kun. You do get minutes . " She said.

Good....Sudo-kun seems to be calming down now...

I should tell Suzune-chan that enough is enough now-

" And you spend all those minutes **warming the bench.**"

" Eh?" I turned to her in shock. Did she really just say that?!

"GRRR! FINE!" Sudo kun yells.

" Eep!" he pushes me to the side and I stumble a bit. I watched with wide-eyes as he was mere inches away from Suzune, staring her down with a furious look.

" You're on, Horikita. Don't cry when you lose."

" The only one doing the losing and crying here will be you, Sudo-kun."

(Locker room....)

" I'm going to lose." Suzune sighs as she changed to more comfortable clothing for basketball.

" Suzune-chan....do you even KNOW how to play basketball?"

" Of course I do." She bites her lip. " It's ah.....you just put the ball in the hoop right? Sounds simple enough-"

I stood up and began my protests,

" WHILE I MAY NOT BE AN EXPERT ON THE SPORT, I DO KNOW THAT IT ISN'T THAT SIMPLE, SUZUNE-CHAN!" I yelled at her.

""

" Like any other sport, there are rules! Basketball has its own set of rules for players to follow! Do you even know ANY of the rules?!" I asked.

"....Hold on, I'm googling that right now." She says as she pulls out her phone.

I lightly slammed my forehead against the locker, releasing an exasperated sigh at the absurdity of my best friend....

" Hmm....traveling violations.....defensive fouls.....offensive fouls.....hm...you're right, it's not that simple after all-"

"NO SHIT!" I yelled.

" Language, Kikyo." She says.

" oop!" I quickly covered my mouth. I then began to cover my face in embarrassment.

" I forgot how you often resort to swearing if you're truly ticked off." Suzune muses.

" You're the only one who does that to me so far...." I mumbled.

" Hm....I think I understand the basics now. I doubt most of these rules will apply in a one-on-one battle." Suzune said.

" Maybe so.....but..." I uncovered my face and looked at her, " You just challenged someone who's known and played basketball for god knows how long! You have no chance of winning!" I cried.

" Show some support, Kikyo. Maybe luck will be on my side." She chuckles as she began putting on her basketball shoes.

" You're not a main character!"

This contingency plan is doomed to fail....

Suzune-chan and I stepped on the court where Sudo-kun was waiting. I looked towards the girl beside me, she wore her gym clothes minus the blazer, she wore her basketball shoes, and her long hair was tied into a ponytail so it wouldn't get in the way.

" Finally." Sudo says as he walks towards us to, basketball in hand. " You ready?" He asked Suzune.

" Yeah. I'm ready to win." Suzune says.

Suzune-chan.....YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO ACT COCKY RIGHT NOW!!!! (> ~ <)

I want to cry. Really. (つ〒 ~ 〒c)

Sudo grins as I felt an immense aura radiating from him. It was malicious.

" All right then. Anyways, we'll use only this half of the court. " He points to the side behind him, " 1v1 rules. I don't have to explain since you probably searched it up already."

Suzune's eyes widened in slight suprise.

" You knew?" She asked, sounding genuine.

OF COURSE HE KNOWS!

EVERYONE COULD EASILY TELL AND SAY THE SAME THING-

" Of course I know. I've played against multiple opponents and I know how a newbie like you would act before a game. " He scoffs.

"....Very well then. Without further ado, shall we begin?" Suzune said.

" Sure. Here ya go." He passes the ball to her before getting into a defensive position. " You better entertain me at the very least, Horikita." He mocks.

Kami-sama....please help her. I mentally prayed.

Horikita PoV

This is my only chance.

I must not screw up.

Even though I have NEVER played basketball before.....even though this might seem foolish.....

I truly believe this is what Ayanokoji-kun would have done had he been here.

I began slowly dribbling the ball in place. Sudo didn't move towards me, but he seemed to be observing me. If I try to drive it straight through him towards the basket, it'll just end up being a foul OR he would drive back along my movement and block me if I try to make one of those ' lay-up' shots.

So that's automatically out of the question.

Tch. I've never shot a ball before. But from what I've seen in the internet, I have to use my dominant hand as the launcher and my less dominant hand (my left) as my path guider. That's the basic idea of the textbook shooting position. And from there, I jump and use my dominant hand to push the ball into the air with calculated force of my strength and the length distance between me and the hoop depending on where I shoot it from.

I could also use the board as a sort of bounce back to make sure the ball goes in the hoop. These are what they call " bank shots" which are usually taken within the 60 degree angle on the court, in other words, the space between the outer and inner corner.

Hmm....

I did a hesitation move to the side, dribbling it to the right side but then taking a step back to where I previously stood....

Sudo-kun didn't budge. He predicted that.

Could it be basketball IQ? Or pure instinct? Either way, this little annoyance is decreasing so many of my options. I better decide on what to do quickly or else he'll catch on to my long simulation process and move in towards me, effectively stealing the ball....

Or maybe....I should bait him with that....

No that wouldn't work. Think harder, Suzune.

No. Rather. There's no time for thinking. I need to make a move now.

Bracing myself for the consequences, I immediately began dribbling all the way to the left corner side of the court and as expected, Sudo quickly followed my movements but kept his distance from me. He's well aware that I'm not someone who can shoot from outside the 3 point line, so he's either baiting me to drive towards the inside or force a shot that will most likely miss....

However...

" I got you right where I want you." I muttered to myself.

Since he wasn't actually within the optimal distance for defense, he gave me space on the aforementioned 60 degree angle on the court. I wordlessly began dribbling towards that area without looking at him for even a second. I hear his suprised grunt but I didn't dare look at him, as I already began preparing my first shot of the game.

I held my breath as I began hearing rapid footsteps coming towards me. I bent my knees a bit, attempting to jump soon, but before I could do that. A hand was up in the air, blocking my shooting path. I looked up a bit to see that Sudo-kun had rushed towards here, ready to block....

Too bad.

I smirk.

I retracted my shooting position and began dribbling the ball past him during the split second wherein he was in the air.

" The hell?!" I hear Sudo-kun mutter in shock.

I had my eyes on the hoop as I dribbled towards it....

I layed it up....

SWOOSH!

It went down the hoop.

I did it. I made my first shot successfully.

Kushida PoV

Eh?

Eh?

EHHH?

" Did she just..." I trailed off in confusion. Did she really make a shot and it went in?

Horikita Suzune, someone who had zero knowledge on basketball rules just a while ago.....

Had made a successful shot over Sudo Ken....who has known and

played basketball for god knows how long?!

C-Could....Suzune chan....a-actually be a main character?!

M-Maybe...there IS hope for her!

" Tch. Looks like this game is already over." I hear Sudo-kun comment. I quickly snapped out of my own amazement and focused back on their battle.

" Huh?" Suzune narrows her eyes at him as she held the ball.

" I scored over you, Sudo-kun. And yet you have the gall to make such a statement? " She says.

" It's not just a statement. It's **fact**. " He grins at her. " You're too predictable."

I feel....a sense of danger radiating from Sudo-kun again...

Horikita PoV

" Predictable, you say?" I asked as I began dribbling the ball. Since I scored, I earned the right for possession.

What does he mean by predictable....

" You'll see." Was all he had to reply before returning to his defensive position.

Something felt off....

His expression softened....but not one that indicates in which he's letting down his guard. No. It feels like absolute concentration. And I noticed something else, in regards to his arm position, they look more relaxed compared to when first guarded me.

I can't tell what Sudo-kun is thinking.

I really can't.

I tried to dribble a bit forwards but then before I knew it, he had already closed in on me the moment I took a step. I dribbled step back due to sudden panic. He got there so fast....but he's not moving any closer. Why did he suddenly do that-- no.

Suzune, you need to get past him somehow. Knowing him, the same trick wouldn't work twice.

I've got to figure out a new strategy. I have to simulate multiple scenarios again-

" Tch. You think too much." I heard him say.

Before I could open my mouth to respond, he had already swiped the ball from my guard.

" Huh?" I watched as he began dribbling to the basket and making a clean layup shot.

How....How did he swipe it....and catch me off-guard...?

He grabs the ball and releases a sigh before looking at me.

" Hey. Get on defense now. I'll show you true offense." He grins again.

I released a sigh. He's right. I need to get on defense. I mustn't be too affected by the sudden shock of how Sudo-kun stole the ball even when my attention was on it. Don't get distracted now, Suzune. You should've expected that this was never going to be within your favor from the start.

" Ready to eat shit?" He taunts as he dribbled the ball in place.

I got into defense position and carefully observed his movements and kept track of the ball's location. I wasn't sure what moves Sudo was going to pull on me but I'll do my utmost best to predict and assume the most optimal option to stop the attack-

SWOOSH!

" Huh?" I said, suprised.

I looked behind me to confirm the worst, and the worst did indeed happen. The ball actually went through the hoop.

He....shot from the 3 point line....

I looked towards Sudo and he gave me a smug expression.

" You didn't consider that possibility, huh?" He laughs. " God, you're too easy!"

Ugh, he's right. I really didn't consider it. Based on Sudo's overall personality and the way he's been acting this entire game....putting aside that strange aura from him....I had foolishly assumed that he would repeatedly take mid range shots or drive to the basket and finish in traffic.

I should've taken in account of the possibility that he could make three point shots.

" Don't worry. That shot still counts as 1 point. I feel sorry for you." He said.

" Don't show me pity." I muttered.

But it only made his grin extends, " From here on out, it's going to get worse Horikita. You better defend well." He warns.

I will go through this until the end.

I won't lose. No. I *refuse* to lose.

I passed him the ball and got into defensive position the moment he received it and started dribbling. I tried to prepare myself for any moves he decides to pull, if he dribbles to the sides then I will follow and keeping close, if he dribbled towards me then I'll reach my hand out to swipe, if he dribbles back a bit then I'll close in. But I needn't be hasty with this. He's got the experience to counter such basic defense, but if I can catch him off-guard then I can win with this defense.

All right, I have a plan now.

Kushida PoV

(20 mins later....)

....

The score was 10 - 1...

Suzune-chan lost...

I released a sigh filled with sorrow. I expected this...but then she gave me hope...

Hope that was immediately demolished as soon as it was established....

I hopped off my seat from the bleaches and headed towards Sudo-kun and Suzune-chan. The latter was breathing heavily as she was down on all fours, sweat dripping from her face while the former stood victoriously with a smug look written all over his face.

" Told ya it was over." Sudo-kun chuckles.

I kneeled beside Suzune-chan and placed a hand behind her back.

" Suzune-chan....you...." Did bad " Did well....really..." No not really! It was a sad display but I can't just say that to her! " But I think there's nothing we can do about it now-"

" You're amazing....Sudo-kun..." Suzune suddenly said.

" Hah?" Sudo lets out a suprised sound.

I was also suprised to hear such a genuine compliment from Suzune-chan towards a human being that's the complete opposite of her.

She slowly stands up and I followed her. I watched curiously as Suzune looked towards Sudo-kun.

" The focus you have in basketball....the intensity you have for the sport. It's amazing. As well as the skills you acquired through training.....that's a level I could only hope to reach." She admits.

" Er....thanks?" Sudo-kun sounded disgusted by Suzune-chan's

words, and while I am happy that Suzune is being nice to him.....it feels so wrong.

" And....during the first possession, the one where I scored one over you for the first and last time?" She mentions.

" Hm?" Sudo waits.

" You let it happen, didn't you? You used that time to observe the way I move and predicted my way of thinking coming to this game...." She deduced.

Wait, really? Could it actually have been a fl-

" Heh. You guessed right." Sudo chuckles, amused. " Yeah. But I also wanted you to feel cocky after making that first shot. That way, even though you don't want to be cocky, the feeling still remains deep down inside. And then it gets you emotionally shook. "

" Also, your movements were just so sloppy. I've met newbies who were 50x better than you, but that's your own fault for challenging me to an easy game." He adds.

" I see...." Suzune sighs," I should've known it was a fluke. And you're right. Perhaps I did subconsciously develop a cocky feeling after hitting that first shot successfully."

" Can't blame ya, really. That's how I felt when I made my first ever basket in my first basketball game with some pro older kids I knew back then. " Sudo replies.

" I see...." Suzune chuckles. " In all honesty, I wish you would have the same determination studying equal to playing basketball...." She says.

"..." Sudo-kun didn't respond to that.

I agree with Suzune-chan's words. Sudo-kun may not have been trying so hard in playing against Suzune but it was amazing to watch nonetheless....minus Suzune-chan's embarrassing display hehe...

" Well then, a deal's a deal. Right?" Suzune glances to me. I nod with a sad smile.

She looks back towards Sudo. " You win Sudo-kun. From today onwards, I will leave you alone. Thank you for wasting time to play my game." She bows her head slightly.

" Geez...now you're bowing your head? The hell? This is creeping me out. Seriously, stop acting weird right now." Sudo complains as he scratches his head.

I giggled quietly to myself. I had to agree with Sudo-kun on that one....it just feels so weird whenever Suzune-chan acts like this. But it's endearing nonetheless.

" I'll go change now." Suzune-chan says before leaving towards the locker room.

" All right, I'll wait for you!" I yelled to her.

Eh? I began to realize something.

Wait, she left me alone with Sudo-kun. It's not like I mind but I don't often talk to Sudo-kun despite being on good terms with everyone (At least I hope so), so I feel a bit nervous. But worry not! I'm the kind and friendly Kushida Kikyo that can melt anyone's cold exterior-

" Has she always been like that?" I hear Sudo-kun ask.

" Always been like what?" I asked back.

" Horikita. Like I don't know....she's always been blunt and rude. Just a minute ago, she sounded sincere and grateful.....It's actually disturbing." He says.

I giggle in response, " I think the same too."

" You two said you were best friends since....forever, I think. Right?"

" Mhm."

" Then was she always like that to you?" He asks.

" Hmm.....nope! She rarely acts like this. She still acts blunt and standoffish even with me, but she means well and she respects other people's dedication and effort...." I smiled towards Sudo. " Just like your hard work when it comes to basketball, Sudo-kun! "

" That's why...I really hope you give her another chance and come to our study group tomorrow-"

" Yeah, not happening." He waves me off before playing basketball by himself again.....

I released a sigh.

Well....I guess we have to figure something else out for Sudo-kun...or maybe focus on the others?

Well, whatever happens....it happens.

Horikita PoV

" What are we going to do now?" I hear Kikyo ask me as we walked back to the dormitories.

" I don't know." I admitted.

" Eh?"

"About Sudo, I mean. I don't really know how to bring him onboard." I clarify.

" Oh....so are we going to focus on the others then?" She asks.

" Yes...most likely. But maybe the day after tomorrow would be the best time to do it." I said.

" Why that specific? Why not tomorrow?"

" Well, I can't just generate plans out of the blue. I have to be thorough...besides " I groaned, " We have to deal with Matsushita-san who's a bit problematic according to Ayanokoji-kun and Karuizawa-san who is likely the most sensitive person in regards to her past. Dealing with these two girls will require well-thought out procedures and precision.....I mustn't accidentally step on a landmine." I explained.

" I understand...." Kikyo nods. " Still, it's a shame we couldn't get Sudo-kun."

" There's nothing we can do about it now..." I sigh. But I would've much preferred to have him join us.

(The next day....)

I spent the entire day focusing on plans to convince Matsushita and Karuizawa to join us. Well, I have no doubt that Matsushita will be easy to convince in joining us again....however, what I'm most concerned about is the reason why she's holding back her abilities according to Ayanokoji-kun's suspicion of course.

Dragging her back will be easy.

Having her open up is a different matter.

But I think I've figured out a way to make her talk. As well as a way to corner Karuizawa-san into joining us, cruel as it sounds, if it HAS to be cruel then I wouldn't hesitate to do it.

" Shall we go, Suzune-chan?" I hear Kikyo ask me.

I nod.

This week was going to end within a few days and all of the study groups within our class will send me their progress reports. It'd be embarrassing if MY study group has no members at all. But tomorrow I'll make sure that outcome will change.

I got up my seat and walked out of the classroom with Kushida. We intended to make our way to the library to study with just the two of us for now while also brainstorming any ideas she might have that could add onto mine.

We entered the library and took our seats on a faraway table. We

took out our books and review papers.

" I guess it's just the two of us for now?" Kikyo says.

" For now. But it'll change tomorrow." I assured her.

She nods and begins reading the review papers. I was about to do the same until the chair opposite of Kikyo was pulled and occupied. I looked towards the person who did that and I gasped slightly in surprise.

" Sudo-kun...?" Kikyo said, suprised as well.

The boy in question crosses his arms with a huff. " I came here because I don't want to lose class points due to my own pride. For once in my life, I'm less stupid than someone and it's even more satisfying knowing that someone is the ' smart' prideful cold Horikita Suzune." he says.

" So you better do well in teaching me or else I'll just look for another group." He threatens with a glare.

But if that's the case, then there would have been no need for a threat. After all, Sudo-kun would've just done that if he really wanted to....so in other words, he came here out of his own

volition.

Kikyo was smiling brightly by my side. Seems like she was over the moon to have Sudo-kun rethink a bit and join us back.....but now....I have to do better. If I mess up, then it'll be my fault again.

I accepted his challenge head-on.

" Very well, Sudo-kun. Tell me, how well are you in math? Since that subject is the most common hardship for most students." I asked.

"...." He averted his eyes.

I widened my eyes.

No.....I have a prediction.....and god I want it to be wrong....

" Actually.....I think I'm...at the level of a-"

Please say middle school. Please say middle school. Please say Middle school. Please say middle school.

" I think I'm at the level of an elementary student..." he admits my worst fears....

" Eh?" Kikyo's smile drops.

I hate this.

I hate you so much for this, Ayanokoji-kun.

Ayanokoji PoV

" Achoo!" I sneezed once.

" Achoo!" I sneezed again.

Did someone mention my name or something?

That's how the saying goes, right? If someone sneezes once, then someone mentioned good things about you.....if you sneeze twice then someone is mentioning bad things regarding you....wait.

I sneezed twice. So that means someone is speaking about me in a negative manner....

Most likely Horikita.

Ah, speaking of her. I hope she's doing well in what I assigned to her. But I have no doubt. If Horikita is truly cursing me on the other side of the world then that means things are well.

"Are you ready to go?" Ichinose snapped me out of my thoughts.

Ah, right.

" Yeah. Let's go tour around London." I affirmed.

Speaking of which, I, too, have my own assignment today. Ichinose and I were given the day off and I want to use this time to extract as much information from her as possible. After all...she's been speaking to Asahina a lot lately, and Asahina Nazuna is also an individual I'm curious about, who claims to wear the same mask as Ichinose.

But at the same time, I'm sure Ichinose is thinking the same. She wants to use this day to extract information from me regarding my sudden interest in Nagumo Miyabi. It's very likely that Asahina spilled the beans for the fun of it during their conversations.

I have to gain as much info as possible while at the same time, giving away less info as much as possible.

She's my enemy.

An enemy I plan to destroy no matter the method.

CHAPTER END!

Suzune vs Sudo basketball match? This wasn't how I initially planned the chapter but it was too good to pass up since I haven't seen other fics write such an idea lmao.

Also, the words were just flowing like a river when I decided to go with this idea.

I hope you enjoyed this chapter!

KawaiiLumine, out~

S2. Episode 5: Tell me, Ayanokoji-kun....

Ayanokoji PoV

" I'm glad Kazumi-san was kind enough to give us a ticket that provided us with a private compartment on this train ride!" Ichinose cheered.

Right, it's similar to that of first class.

Ichinose and I were currently in the train heading to one of the famous pre-historic monuments of the world. The Stonehenge. A place deemed part of UNESCO's world heritage sites.

I've read a little about it beforehand. Scientists believe that it was built between 2000 and 3000 BC. On the internet, there were many surrounding theories regarding the true purpose and origins of the Stonehenge. I mean, anyone would be curious as to why such a structure was built on one of the plain hills and there's little implication as to what the humans before us had used it for.

One of these theories relate to the story of King Arthur, but most of its basis surrounded a certain character that played a huge role in King Arthur's life. The wizard, Merlin.

Apparently, Merlin came to the plains and instructed magical giants to build the structure to act as a way of teleportation and transport for Arthur. But personally, I don't believe it. I mean, seriously, "wizards"? People are free to believe in anything they want but the world cannot accept all of it, after all, we human beings often function with logic and evidence to back it up and the only evidence the Merlin theory has, is its fairytale book counterpart. Which is...not really a good case.

Anyways, another theory suggests that the Stonehenge is what remains of an ancient Roman structure that deteriorated overtime. And to back up that theory, scientists have found remnants of Roman artifacts and objects situated within and around the stonehenge which implies that either Romans have visited it quite frequently or a group were stationed to be there. Either way, it's proof enough that its once been used by romans. The only thing that places a setback on this theory is the fact that the roman items found by scientists were later on carbon dated to be from early AD (13 AD, it is said.) therefore it might not have been the romans who built the structure. It's likely that they stumbled upon it and used it for the time being for whatever reasons.

As for the last popular theory, the Stonehenge was theorized to have been used as a sort of place in which groups of unknown people conduct rituals or medicinal/spiritual purposes. Unlike the the two aforementioned theories, this one seems to be a lot more vague considering there's not much evidence to support this and yet people will often believe this theory to be the most accurate. A funny contradiction to my earlier statement in which we human beings function through logic and the evidence to backup that logic.

" Hey, Ayanokoji-kun!" I hear Ichinose's voice. I immediately left my world of thought and quickly looked to her.

" Hm?"

" Are you okay? You seem to be thinking hard about something."
She said.

Ah. Seems she caught that.

" I was, actually." I leaned the right side of my cheek on my fist. "
I was just thinking about the crazy world we live in..." I said.

She laughs. " Is that so? I suppose, we do live in a crazy world, huh." She looks out the window where she saw view of the passing trees and cityscapes. " It's a random thought but.....isn't it funny how humans function through logic and evidence, yet, they tend to easily believe theories about the way things are without valid proof?"

Hm. Seems she was thinking about the same thing, or at the very least, she somehow....coincidentally discovered what I was implying. Seriously, this girl is troublesome.

" You read my mind." I muse.

" Eh? Did I?" She winks playfully.

She definitely did.

" Anyways," I decided to change the topic, " What makes you so interested in seeing the Stonehenge? Personally, I don't really see much to be interested about it besides the fact that its a historical treasure. Which is....something I'm not really interested in at all." I asked.

What I said was the truth. I'm not particularly hyped about the Stonehenge like Ichinose. (in fact, she constantly suggested it to be one the places we'll venture today...)

" Well, " She looks back to me. " Coming to England might be a once-in-a lifetime opportunity for someone like me. So I want to see all the great things it has to offer....of course, " She then giggles, " As long as it's within the price range Kazumi-san gave us."

Ah, right. We shouldn't spend too much of Kazumi's money or else she might want to exact vengeance on the both of us somehow.

" Yeah, let's not spend too much of her money or else she might kill us both." I said.

" Her? Kill? Kazumi-san is harmless~!" Ichinose corrected as if Kazumi was her precious pet...

Wait, could it be that they're relationship is like that-

" I'm assuming you're thinking of something lewd, Ayanokoji-kun." Ichinose smirks.

" Well, you assumed right." I replied.

She laughs again. " Hahaha! Seriously, you're really funny sometimes! It's a wonder how not many girls had their eyes on you before the whole.....y'know....death game reveal?" She says.

" I'm boring in their eyes, I suppose."

" Hmm....I suppose you do have a point. But they're just completely unaware of the person you truly are. Maybe they're a bit wary of you now....considering your victory during the first game." She says with a thinking expression.

" Perhaps so. But what about you?" I asked.

" Hm?"

" Your victory during the second game. You single-handedly made yourself stand out as a target and I have no doubt Sakayanagi and Ryuen are completely bitter, even if they try to hide it. They're going to do whatever it takes to ' humble' you." I said.

She smiles. " I would LOVE to see them try, really. But....I highly doubt they can achieve it." She says.

" Why is that?" I asked.

" Let's just say, I consider Ryuen-kun and Sakayanagi-san's way of thinking.....' primitive' in the environment we are in. They may seem open-minded but really they're still too narrow about certain concepts..." She waves her hand, " They may have a strong exterior or may exhibit a powerful aura....but deep inside their lion-like behaviour.....is just another scared little kitten."

" I'm not sure whether I should define you as someone arrogant or someone confident." I said.

Arrogance is usually a trait derived from victory and the possession of power to rule over those below. Which is exactly what Ichinose possesses. However, whether or not she's confident or arrogant does not matter much since she has the abilities to back up her words, and yet, I'd still like to know where she stands on the two personally.

" Hm....I believe Confidence and Arrogance often go hand-in-hand. The moment one develops confidence, then comes a high percent chance that one will also develop arrogance. Even if you try to deny yourself of it, you most likely have already thought of it at some point or even felt it." She answered.

So she believes that confidence often breeds arrogance.....

" But what about you? Do you see yourself as someone arrogant or confident?" I asked.

" Both." Was her reply.

Both huh....

" What about you, Ayanokoji-kun? Do you see yourself as someone arrogant? Or someone confident?" She asked the question back.

I lean back on my seat and crossed my arms. " Me? Hm...." I began to think carefully.

I watch her eyes glimmer with interest.

.....I see.

So you've deciphered my true intentions in diving into this topic....

Third Person PoV

' You think I didn't know, Ayanokoji-kun? Granted, it did take a few minutes for me to understand your true intentions in asking such a question. I can sense your curiosity but hidden behind that is an ulterior motive, right?' Ichinose thought.

' You must be thinking of my ulterior motive-- no, rather, you're mentally asking me if you were correct in your deduction. But even so, you admitted to being someone confident so-' Ayanokoji thinks,

' --I'm confident that I'm right. What's the point in searching for an answer that you'll only lace with your vague tone? It's incredibly difficult to read you, but that's what makes it fun. No wonder the director has set her eyes on you from the very moment you entered the school. But back to the topic at hand, you wanted to know my personal opinion on whether or not I consider myself arrogant or confident because--' Ichinose thought.

'--because depending on your answer, I can form a plan around it. A plan on HOW and WHEN to defeat you. ' - Ayanokoji

' If I said I was confident, then you could've formed a plan on how to break it. By breaking confidence, I'd break focus. Human confidence is easily shattered. But if I said I was arrogant--' - Ichinose

' --Then I could define you as someone ignorant. Someone who believes they're better at everything. Someone absolutely conceited with themselves and therefore blind to their own surroundings. Human confidence can easily wound a person's self-perception once broken, but if I were to shatter an arrogant person then--' - Ayanokoji.

'-- Then it'll be scarring. By humbling an arrogant person, their whole world will turn upside down right before their very eyes....and they'll simply freeze. Unable to move--' - Ichinose.

'-- Unable to speak- ' - Ayanokoji.

'-- Unable to think clearly....' - Ichinose.

' And most importantly....' - Ayanokoji.

' *The one thing that matters....* ' - Ichinose

' *Unable to win.* ' - Both.

Ayanokoji PoV

But...unfortunately, this battle has to end with a stalemate. For now.

" I share the same sentiment." I said. " Or rather, I'm quite unsure of it myself but....I think your answer is relative to what I would have thought." I told her.

She smiles again, her narrowing eyes relaxing back to its natural ' welcoming' gaze.

" It's nice to hear that we can agree on certain things, Ayanokoji-kun." She says.

" Yeah." I nod.

Neither of us were thinking ahead of the other during this small conversation. We operated on the same wavelength and tried our best to subtly one-up the other. I am yet to discover a true weakness of hers, and she's yet to discover any weakness from me.

Stalemate.

(An hour and 30 minutes later....)

We were currently at the Stonehenge....but...

" Geez.....so many people." I muttered.

What did I expect? Of course there would be dozens of tourist from around the world who would take the chance to check out this prehistoric monument of England. At this point, I'd rather return to the hotel or at the very least, do something else.

" Ayanokoji-kun!" Ichinose snaps me out of my thoughts once more. I turn to her and I was met with her phone in front of my view.

" Could you take a picture?" She asks.

I looked around and then back to her.

" Are you sure? The spot we're currently doesn't really seem picture-worthy." I was referring to the dozens of people in the background that would damper the view of the monument.

" Oh! Don't worry." She suddenly smiles.

I raised a brow. I wondered what she was plotting but before I could ask about it, she suddenly pulled me towards the monument with snickers that indicated mischievous intent...

She stealthily led us around the crowd and then led me to a certain spot behind one of the large stone structures. We hid there.

" What are we doing here?" I asked.

" Shhh..." She shushed me. I then watch her put on black gloves before suddenly reaching into deep inside her coat....pulling out a-

" No." I immediately placed a hand on her wrist, stopping her from pulling it out completely.

" Trust me." She says.

" I find that quite difficult to do, Ichinose. Especially when you're clearly planning to cause panic for these tourists by shooting a gun-

" It's a blank. Don't worry about it-

" That's not the only issue. Once the people start running then a report will be filed and the cops will immediately be on their way here. I don't know how long you plan to stay here but-

" Then how about after I shoot the gun and scare away all these tourists; You and I can take a picture together, and then solo pictures, and then we dispose this gun. and then we carry on with out **date**. Does that sound good?" She said.

" Of course not-- wait, did you just say date-" But that was a mistake. A moment of blunder. Because soon after I took her bait, she immediately pulled out the gun and began shooting a couple of times to the sky.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

" AAAAHHHH WHAT IN THE WORLD--"

" GUNFIRE!"

" RUN!"

" JIMMMY, DEAR, LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!"

Screams of panic erupted. Ichinose laughed at the scene of these groups of people running away to their cars or rentals. Driving away as fast as they possibly could in fear of one of them getting shot which is.....debatable considering this is Ichinose Honami.

" Heheh! Look at them all~" She cheers.

" Yeah....I'm looking at it." I said with a disappointed tone.

Soon, the dozens of people that were once happily taking family

pictures or travel memories have now completely abandoned the area. Ichinose and I stepped out of our hiding spot, she looks around and smiles.

"No more people!" She says, happily.

" If this were to have happened under normal circumstances then I would've been elated. However, that's not the case." I said as I looked at my watch. " I estimate 1 hour before the cops arrive to see the ruckus you caused. So--"

She suddenly grabs my wrist and we ran to a certain angle from the stonehenge.

" Then stop wasting time! Let's take pictures!" She said.

I sighed and decided to just go along with it for now. Take a few pictures and then leave.

" So pretty...." Ichinose coos at a primrose flower.

We just barely escaped the entire area of the Stonehenges. After that, we took a bus ride to our next stop, which is at the every-famous Kew gardens of London. Though, it is officially called the "

Royal Botanic Gardens " in recent times. We're surrounded by flora everywhere and this actually feels like a place I would love to visit on a daily basis during early morning or a sunny day.

" Quick picture..." I hear Ichinose murmur before I heard a quick photo snap from her phone. She took pictures of all the flowers around her vicinity.

Crocus

Daffodils

Primrose

Snowdrops

Tulips

etc.

There were thousands of flowers, and I'm not particularly interested in having to count the exact amount since it's highly likely there'd be more flowers in the restricted areas of the garden where the employees are raising them separately in case the flowers in the main and outside garden were to have wilted or faced a tragedy they couldn't control in time.\

However, according to the internet, this place houses over 50,000 flowers....

Yeah, it's a waste time to try and count it myself....

" Hey, Ayanokoji-kun. You're not going to take pictures?" Ichinose says as she waves her phone in front of me, showing me all her wonderful pictures.

" I'm good." I answered. I didn't really see the need to take pictures like Ichinose.

" Are you sure?" She spins around as if to show me the majestic site we are in with passion, " This might be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! "

I sigh. " Maybe so. But I got it all stored in here." I point my finger to my head. " There's no issue."

" Hoh~? So Ayanokoji-kun has great memory? Well, that's to be expected but it makes me wonder to what extent." She asks, curiously.

" How about you take a guess?" I humored her.

" Photographic memory?" She says.

" No. And that's only a concept without practical evidence. " I told her.

Photographic memory was a concept created within recent years. Photographic memory is the ability to recall a memory at will and examine its every detail like a photo, zooming in and zooming out on small or big details, rotating them to see an unforeseen angle than before.....recalling each and every detail with high precision. Most people often abuse having this concept, but in reality, it's nothing but a fantasy.

They often confused it with another concept (with actual evidence to back it up) which is-

" Eidetic memory then?" She says.

Exactly what I was about to elaborate on. Eidetic memory is a level below the unproven photographic memory. It is the ability to vividly recall a memory (mostly recent) with the same high precision except only for a brief moment and it has its own limits compared to the myth that is photographic memory. People with eidetic memory are rare, most of the signs of having eidetic memory is seen within children during their toddler stages. Overtime, the ability of eidetic memory often dissolves and that's the reason why it's not often seen in adults.

However, if you're lucky enough, you can possess such an ability forever. No matter how old you get. If the memory is strong enough, if your brain is trained enough, you can possess eidetic memory for your entire lifetime.

Ah right, I need to answer Ichinose....

" Nah. I just have good memory, is all. I wouldn't go so far as to call it ' Eidetic Memory'." I shrug.

She raises a brow. She didn't buy my answer at all, but I'll leave it up to her own interpretation.

" Ah, what a shame then...." She suddenly says.

"...." I waited for her to continue.

" You see, I actually HAVE eidetic memory, Ayanokoji-kun." She says.

What?

" I can remember a lot of things in vivid detail. Like how your eyebrow slightly furrows whenever you're plotting something against me or how your mouth is slightly lower than usual whenever you hit....what's most likely a stalemate. Am I correct?" She smiles.

.....

" I can also remember details of Sakayanagi-san and Ryuen-kun. How Sakayanagi-san grips her cane unusually tight whenever she's in a state of negative emotions and when exactly she'll go out of control. And as for Ryuen? It all comes down to his mocking and sly behaviour. When I knocked him down a notch, his smile dropped and his whole facade broke like glass. " She says.

She's....

" Am I correct, Ayanokoji-kun?" She asks with me with her head tilted slightly. As if challenging me.

I see.

She placed me on check, huh.

She mixed in a few lies with her seemingly truthful statement. I am most confused with my own expression since I often can't tell the expression I'm wearing in moments such as that. But Ryuen and Sakayanagi's expressions and detail were all on point. She might be lying about how she ' figured out' my expression.

This is a trap. If I don't tread carefully, then information will go into her hands.

If I agree with her, then that's the same as saying I actually possess the same Eidetic Memory. Which in reality, was only a bluff (referring to the lies she mixed in with the truth) from her but she'd gain information from me, which is something I'm trying to make sure stays locked and secured. By saying I have eidetic memory, it will broaden her views on ways to possibly defeat me using my memory against me in the future most likely.

But I can't exactly say ' no' either. If I do indeed say ' no ' then that's still the same as admitting to having Eidetic Memory but in a more subtle tone. If I say ' no', then it's very likely she'll ask me " why? " for me to further elaborate and if I try to stay silent then it'll only heighten her suspicion.

But...if I choose to change topic or dodge the question. Then the result won't do so well either. Denying it would only make things worse.

A fascinating check, Ichinose. Truly. Anyone else caught in my position would falter and give you the incentive that they do indeed possess eidetic memory or don't.

However, I've been playing chess my entire life. Mental chess is no different. Although you possess a fair amount of experience playing mental chess, there is one thing that you should know about me. Or rather, the only information I'm allowing to seep out.

It's....

" Hm, I don't know. I didn't really pay attention." I shrug.

Her eyes widen in slight surprise before she pursed her lips in irritation.

That I'm great at stalemates.

" I see....well, worry not. I was just bluffing, hehe~!" She brushes away the irritation just as quickly. And also admitted to it being nothing more than a bluff.

By acting unaware of the situation, I successfully negated major information from seeping out while sacrificing a minor one. If she continued to assume her stand on having eidetic memory by telling me that I'm lying or something, then I can continue lying and playing dumb which will only anger her in theory.

If she continues to do that, then I will ask for proof. If she explains everything in detail then it could prove or disprove her bluff. If she has eidetic memory, then that's something I can use. If she doesn't, then that will make things easier. She has no choice but to abandon pressing on the matter further or else she'll throw away valuable information.

Everything counts.

Horikita PoV

" You're going grea, Sudo-kun!" Kikyo cheers.

" Really?" Sudo asked and without looking, I already knew Kushida nodded with enthusiasm.

I carefully examined Sudo's review papers and.....it's not perfect but at least he's in the grey now.

" You're getting better, Sudo-kun." I told him.

He was still learning but I can tell he really is trying to put in the work. That itself deserves acknowledgement.

" Well...I guess studying wasn't bad after all. Why didn't you teach us like this, Horikita?" He asked me.

If you had asked me this earlier, I wouldn't have an answer either. I am simply following Ayanokoji-kun's orders but since I began teaching you like this.....I think I understand now.

Ayanokoji-kun laid out the blueprints in order for me discover your weaknesses and to redeem my mistake. Acting aggressive will cause the group to break apart and then I'd be given a reason to try and glue it back together one by one. Even though I'd been left with the leader role. The class still does not trust me and remains wary of me, so this will also provide me the chance to secure people who can vouch their trust for me. Sudo, Matsushita, Karuizawa. These three are important for that very reason.

Kikyo alone will not be enough to help redeem my image in front of the class. They'll only see her opinion as a biased opinion. I've already stopped Kikyo from trying to convince the class so as to not damage her reputation within our class by repairing mine. I don't wish for her to go through that again.

Putting the vouching aside...

Ayanokoji-kun deemed these three individuals as priority number one. He never explicitly stated why (as expected, ugh) so I'm going to follow the interpretation I had of this plan. To summarize; he wants me to get to know these three people on a more personal level and to adjust their habits to suit the class.

He wants Karuizawa to open up more and to become more cooperative. Or....to be more accurate, he'd want me to break her character down and shatter her facade to see the true Karuizawa

Kei.

For Matsushita, he'd want me to find out the reason behind her holding back her abilities. And then convince her to stop holding back and put in all the effort she has hidden from us.

And lastly, Sudo-kun. He'd want me to keep him under control and to help him study and become smarter. Sudo's physical abilities will be useful if there ever comes a game where it prioritizes it. But in order to compensate for the time being, Sudo-kun must also become smarter and stronger in keeping his low temper in check. Otherwise, it might cause chaos within our class which will likely lead into another dispute between him and Ayanokoji-kun...

And everyone is well-aware of who will win in that dispute....

" Suzune-chan?" I felt a finger poke my cheek. I jolted slightly and looked towards Kikyo.

" What is it?" I asked.

" You've been spacing out. Sudo-kun asked you a question." She points to Sudo. " Is something bothering you?"

" Oh." I straightened my back. " Sorry, I was thinking about something else and forgot to answer."

I looked towards Sudo. " To answer your question; I was too impatient and I should've been a little more patient in teaching our group. I want to fix that and get the others back so we could pass the midterms with ease." I said, not saying the truth about how Ayanokoji-kun wanted me to act impatient and without care."

" Oh I see...well I guess that's all right." Sudo nods slowly.

" Sudo-kun. I want to make this group a success. I can't do it alone." I said.

He looks at me, expecting me to continue. Which I will shortly.

" If it's not too much trouble, could you please convince Ijuin and Hondo to return?" I asked. " They'll most likely listen to you....even if they don't then....you could-"

" Beat them into submission?" Sudo says.

" Yes, exactly that." Whatever is necessary.

" U-Um but please don't be hasty in doing that!" Kikyo quickly

interjects. " Try to talk to them first!"

While I'd also prefer the method to be clean, I don't think pressuring them into joining using a certain amount of force is a bad method, either. In fact, it sounds like the quicker route to take.

" All right, all right." Sudo raises his hands in surrender. " I won't beat their asses. But talking to them? If they set me off then it might just-"

" Kikyo will come with you." I said.

"Eh?" Kikyo turns to me in surprise. I also turned to her but with a serious expression.

Please understand Kikyo, I think I can do this alone...

You must keep Sudo in check.

I gave her a look.

Her eyes widen a bit. It seems she understands.

She turns to Sudo. " Don't worry, Sudo-kun. I'll accompany you! "

" Sure. But..." Sudo looks to me. " What about you? What're you gonna do?"

I closed my book before looking at him.

" I'll retrieve Karuizawa and Matsushita myself. I won't fail." I said.

Sudo releases a sigh.

" Then Kushida and I won't fail either. " He said.

I nodded. " You can try to convince them now. I'll make my move tomorrow." I said.

They both nod in agreement.

From here on out, I have to be very meticulous in dealing with the two girls (Karuizawa and Matsushita) just like how Ayanokoji-kun would do it....

Ayanokoji PoV

The sky's turning dark now.....

I released a tired sigh. We've been touring around London to its most famous attractions. And frankly, I'm quite beat.....I want nothing more than to just go back to the hotel and take all the rest I could get before returning to our temporary jobs as hotel/resort staff.

" That was fun, wasn't it?" I hear Ichinose comment.

" I suppose it was." I had to admit. Despite how tiring today was.....it'd be a lie to say I didn't enjoy it even the slightest bit.

I placed my hands in the pockets of my coat.

" Well, we should probably head back to the hotel now." I checked the time on my phone and it was currently 7 pm.

((Paimon here! I did some research on London's timezone and.....jesus christ, 16 hours of daylight from June-July? If anyone from London can confirm it then plz do. Lmao.

But in this situation, Imma just make it dark out at 7 pm for plot purposes. Anyways back to writing for me and back to reading for you!))

" Kazumi might scold us-"

" Before we do that. Can we visit the London eye? Please?" She looks to me with puppy eyes.

Seriously...

The London Eye, huh. It's also a famous attraction but....I don't recall that being part of our plans. (And part of Kazumi's expenses...)

" But who's gonna pay for that-"

" Kazumi-san of course!" She pulls out the card Kazumi left us with.

I looked at the card and then to Ichinose and then back to the card....and then back to Ichinose.

" Kazumi's going to kill us both." I said.

She smiles. " Is that a yes?"

How, in any context, in any universe, did that reply sound like a ' yes ' to you? Ugh, I'm always surrounded by crazy girls who feel they are superior or girls who just want to torment me in everything.

But I just released a sigh, keeping such thoughts to myself. In fact, I could use this opportunity....to....

" You know what?" I shrug. " Sure. Let's do it."

" Yay!"

(Pathway to London Eye....)

We were making our way to the ticket office where the conductor should be staying in. There's no doubt that we're gonna have to spend a little above our allowance with Kazumi's money in order to get ahead of the line. I feel bad for her but.....well, that's what happens when you entrust teenagers with your debit card.

You left us with the debit card....

Now we're gonna turn it into a debit card without the 'i'.

But in all seriousness, it's likely that Kazumi is paid well. So it doesn't really matter. (Copium.)

That aside....

I eyed a certain machine next to the ticket office.

Bingo.

" Ichinose I'm going to go the restroom for a bit. Please go ahead and buy us our tickets." I informed her.

" Hm? Oh, sure! Don't take too long though." She says.

I nod.

" Here we are!" Ichinose wiggled in her seat in excitement.

I leaned back on my seat and released a sigh. We were currently in one of the capsules, ready to take lift off into the wonderful view from the London Eye. It's completely night time now and the weathers seems clear, you could see the stars and the city lights. It'll be a wonderful view to see once we reach peak height.

The capsule began moving upwards slowly...

" I'm so excited..." Ichinose murmurs as she stares at the window where could only see the water for now.

" If Kazumi nags at me. I'm pointing the blame to you." I said.

" Hehe! That's fine with me." She then looks at me with the same smile. " I enjoyed today. And I think the London Eye is the perfect finisher, don't you agree?"

" I agree. Once we reach the highest altitude, the view will be amazing." I said.

She nods.

And now we wait....in silence.....

Almost there....

" The view..." Ichinose gasps as she stares intently at the window.

10...

9....

8....

" I'm taking a picture." Ichinose says as she takes out her phone.

7....

6....

Ichinose snaps a picture and then smiles to herself. " My class will be happy to see these wonderful pictures..."

5....

4.....

3.....

" Hey, Ayanokoji-kun." Ichinose looks to me with that same smile.

" Hm?"

2....

" You fiddled with the generator, didn't you?"

.....

1.....

Once we reached the highest altitude....

The London Eye stopped moving.

Ichinose stares at me with an amused look.

I stared back in silence.

" Well....seems I was right." She crosses her arms. " I was going to do the same but you beat me to it. Hehe~" She says.

All day, you and I have been stuck in a stalemate.

" I'm sure the workers underneath will fix the London eye as quickly as possible. I estimate the latest to be 30 minutes." ichinose says.

Today, at the very least, I need to break this stalemate. I need to gain some information from you.

There's no better time to do it than now.

" You're right. So why don't I cut to the chase."

" Go ahead, Ayanokoji-kun~"

I leaned back once more on my seat and placed my hands into my coat pockets to seem relaxed.

" You've been talking to Asahina Nazuna a lot, lately. " I started off, " From an outsiders view, it might seem like typical girl talk but I know you're not some typical girl in the eyes of men. The same applies to Asahina Nazuna, who boldly claims to wear the same mask as you. When she said that, your expression cracked ever so slightly."

" Yes, that....really suprised me." She admits.

" I've talked with Asahina as well. She's likes to play with her words...she's direct but stays indirect at the same time with the way she phrases her statements. A bold woman but secretive."

" And? What does that have to do with me?" She asks.

" When you two talked....." I stared into her blue eyes, diving into her inner self....attempting to dissect her lies or truth.

" She mentioned about me taking an interest in Nagumo, right?" I said.

She giggles in response.

" I'm assuming that's a yes. Once again, I'll be so bold as to ask what exactly she told you." I said.

" What she told me? Hmm....." She then goes into a thinking expression. " She told me that she knows why you've been searching for Nagumo Miyabi-senpai. Saying something about the ' eyes of a hunter' . "

"Anything else?"

" No, just that. " She said.

We stared each other in silence. I tried my best look deep into her eyes and attempted to discern whether she's hiding the bigger truth with a lie.

I sighed. It seems like there was nothing.

" I didn't lie this time~" Ichinose says.

Indeed, you didn't.

" Ichinose. "

" Hm?"

I wonder....what would she say if I asked her about this.

" Back at the second game. During your truth or lie, the statement you were given accused you of being responsible for the murder of 10 people including your previous friends and family."

I remembered that clearly. Something was off about it. With how specific each statement was at the time, it was very likely for them to be true. However, Ichinose strategically fooled everyone else into thinking her statement was also a truth by making the statement sound specific by adding the number 10.

" You think I'm capable of killing, Ayanokoji-kun?" She asks, feigning innocence.

I continued, " Not only that but also during the first game when you and I stumbled upon the unconscious body of a student.....your eyes glistened with familiarity. And you formed a small grin, as if it excited you." I voiced out my previous thoughts to her.

""

" So have you ever killed someone before, Ichinose?" I asked her straight on.

" Hehe.....Hehehe.....HAHAHAHA!" She begins laughing. " I-I'm sorry hahaahah! p-please give....a f-few seconds hehe...." She

continued laughing heartily.

" Ahem." After a few seconds, she calmed herself down and regained most of her composure. But I could still see the amusement in her eyes.
" Yes, I have." She admitted.

" Then is it right for me to assume that you were responsible for the murder of Ike Kanji?" I asked.

Her grin widens.

" Yes." She admits.

It was only a guess at first but then it started to make sense.....but there's still one thing left in the grey.

" Why did you do it?" I asked.

" Because it was fun." She said.

...

It seems her connection with the director is stronger than expected. There seems to be more depth between them that I am yet to discover completely. I want to ask her about her history but then she'll repeat the question to me and then we'll both lie until she suggests for the both of us to create a small truce right here and now. The truce that states that the both of us, for these 30 minutes, will not tell a single lie and will respond truthfully when asked directly about any topic.

And knowing myself, I would jump at the chance. Even though I am not one to make wagers using my upbringing as a prize.....

Being in this school itself had already been a wager from the moment the curtains unveiled. I have no doubt that one day everyone will come to know of my past but for now, I intend to preserve it and to not let information slip.

However, when faced with a stalemate like this.....I am willing to break it.

But I'm not going to be the one who initiates it. It will only give her the idea that I am a bit impatient which is not exactly....a lie per say when I consider my thoughts prior to this.

Well, it all depends if Ichinose is willing to make that move.

" I see. Just like the director..." I said.

" Mhm." She hums in satisfaction. She looks extremely happy when I related her to the director.

She then turns her head to the view once more from the window.

" Have you taken a picture of this view yet, Ayanokoji-kun?" She asks.

" I recall saying that I have no need to. I'm sure you recall it as well."

She chuckles. " I know but..." She places a hand on the window. " It's a really great view. The lights of London....the clear skies which reveal the beautiful stars....and the full moon." She glances to me.

" Doesn't it actually feel like a date?" She teases.

" A date? Perhaps so." I admit as I, too, began glancing at the view. She was right. It was beautiful.

" But...you and I are both aware that today....was nothing but a mental battle, right?" I hear Ichinose say.

" Indeed." I concurred. There was no reason for me to deny it.

" Ichinose, how do you see your classmates? "

" Hm?"

" Do you truly see them as your friends?" I asked.

" Friends? No. Obviously not. I don't care for them one bit. If I did, then....that would become an annoying weakness now, wouldn't it?" She says.

Her response wasn't a defensive mechanism to hide that she truly cares for her classmates even the slightest bit. No. She was serious. And hidden behind her tone, she's actually giving me the idea that she'd do anything to win....even if it means sacrificing all of them.

Ichinose Honami....she, too, has resolve. But the resolve to do what? That's something I don't know.

What reason does she have to want to win?

I want to destroy her. No matter the method.

I want it to be painful for her. I want the loss to sink in into her very being. To absorb it and process it.

And then observe how she takes the loss and recovers from it.....if she'll ever recover from it.

If I beat her normally....then she just loses the war. She suffers no casualties. That's not how I want her to lose. And she herself probably has thought about it too. That's why she's confident in our battle, she has an idea of the method I'd take.

Because she herself does the same.

" I see....how pitiful for your class then, since they seem to trust you quite a lot. Well, if we exclude Kanzaki that is." I said.

" Kanzaki-kun? Ah, right. He does know a bit about me. He's walking on the surface. He's yet to discover the true person I am.....what I am willing to do....what I find amusing to do..." She says in a low excited tone.

" To you, he's nothing but a tool." I said.

" All of them are tools to me, Ayanokoji-kun. " she pauses before speaking once again, " Don't you also see everyone around you as tools?"

Tools....

See everyone around me as tools?

I want to lie to her and say that I don't. After all, I make an effort to remind myself that I want to change as a person. To be free from this way of thinking.....I just want to be normal. I want to be seen like everyone else. Just a normal person.

But after everything that's happened.....both in recent times and in my past.....

There's a part of me that doubts its want to change. Now and then, I wonder if I should really stay the same....to go back to the person I was....

But that's not my resolve.

That's not what I want my resolve to be.

" No, I don't." I told her.

" Well....isn't *that* the biggest lie I've heard in quite a while.....is it ' normal' for you to be lying to yourself, Ayanokoji-kun?" I hear her say.

" Lying to myself? "

" Of course! You can't possibly tell me that you don't see them the way I do. In fact, it's very likely you lived a life longer with that mindset than I have." She continues to pressure.

" Stop assuming things, Ichinose." I blankly spoke, " Unlike you, I'm quite stable in the head when it comes to how I view relationships." Another lie-- no....it's a truth.

" Hmm....that so...." I hear her mumble.

30 minutes is almost up....

I can feel that the London Eye will start functioning again soon...

I'm a bit disappointed that this battle will also end with a stalemate. Truly a waste. Well, I gained a tiny bit of information from this. The way she shines whenever she's compared to the director....the way she sees the people around her.....how far she's willing to go for both her goal and her own amusement.

Yes, while it may not be the information I deeply wanted. The information I've managed to gather will nonetheless prove useful for when I start planning my next attack.

For now, I guess I just have to enjoy this view--

" Can I ask you one last question, Ayanokoji-kun?" She suddenly says.

One last question?

Sighing, I decided to humor her.

" Sure. What is it?" I asked. The only way to find out is to let her ask the question.

" Tell me, Ayanokoji-kun...."

" From the moment you were born; Was there ever anyone you truly considered your friend?"

During my silence, the London eye began descending.

.....

Without looking, I could tell that Ichinose was currently looking at me. Peering into me.

" Why so silent, Ayanokoji-kun?" She asks.

A friend...

Someone....I...

" Hey, what's your name? "

" My...name...?"

" A real name. Decide on one, right now."

" My name....."

" I'm waiting."

" My name....it's....."

His name....

Someone...I truly considered a friend...

No.....the truth is...

I never had anyone like that.

The person I used to be.....ignored such a concept....

But his name.....his name is something I will remember.

I suddenly hear Ichinose giggling to herself. My eyes widened and I quickly snapped out of my thoughts.

" It seems that my question left quite an effect on you, Ayanokoji-kun." She smirks.

She....

" You thought this battle would end without a victor?"

Ichinose....

" No, like I'd ever let that happen."

I was a fool....

Why did I...

" It seems I've learned something interesting about you, Ayanokoji-kun. "

....

Our capsule finally returns to the ground.

Our door was quickly opened by the conductor and staff and they wore worried and apologetic expressions.

" We're so sorry , Sir and Miss. Something happened with the generator and--"

" It's quite all right! We had a fun time up there. We got to enjoy the view a little longer..." She pauses and turns to me with a smug grin. " Right, Ayanokoji-kun~?"

Damn it...

I've made a blunder.

I let her break the stalemate.

CHAPTER END!

7k words. Sheeeessshhh

Ichinose broke the stalemate :D

I love writing her as an antagonist. You just don't see her as a threat in most cote fics, so I wanted to make her a threat in this fic.

And what better way to do that.....than to suddenly hit our usually op invincible protagonist with a sneak attack!

And this chapter also provided you Ayanokoji's (minor) thoughts about his past! And our certain character that S2 Episode 0 already revealed!

Well, I hope you enjoyed this chapter. It wasn't supposed to be 7k words long but I'll take it.

SadisticPaimon (Yeah I'm back bitch), out~!

S2. Episode 6: Mirror.

Ayanokoji PoV

(Hotel Room....)

How long has it been?

Since anyone has truly caught me off-guard like that?

Perhaps I've truly gotten rusty...

Perhaps there's truly more to this world's people, that I've yet to know.

A psychotic director.

A psychotic student.

And everyone else, they wear masks to conceal themselves. Most of the students have a past they wish to hide desperately.

I came to this school, expecting to change myself. To understand the people in this new environment, to blend in as "normal" amongst them.

Or perhaps, my real motive for change is not to become "normal". Rather, I try to change so I can be rid of my past. To deceive myself in the false pretense of normalcy.

I thought, that maybe, I was ready to "lose" in order for my changes to occur. I thought...I wanted to lose. In even the slightest instance, I wished to lose but...

I gripped the sides of the sink tightly as I stared at my reflection in the mirror.

In reality, without false pretenses, without constant self-deception.....

I wanted to win. At all costs.

To constantly win over my adversaries.

To not show even the slightest bit of weakness-- no, I had no weakness to begin with.

I rid myself of that long ago.

The moment I turned into the monster I was before.....I threw away the precious humanity I was born with.

Winning is everything.

I sighed,

" It seems....my resolve to **change** was pointless after all..."

Change, social relationships, and even freedom.....it's pointless to me.

*Because my resolve to **win** is paramount.*

Horikita PoV

(Saturday)

" Horikita-san? " A voice called.

I looked up from my book. My eyes landed onto the figure of Matsushita Chiaki.

" Take a seat, Matsushita-san." I said to her.

She wore a puzzled expression, but nonetheless obeyed and was seated opposite of me. We were in the classroom, I had called her here to unravel her character. I held onto the hope that she won't be too much of a difficult figure to deal with, or else I might have to resort to more....unusual means.

I closed my book and placed it on the table.

I looked at her with a serious gaze.

" Why do you hold back on your scores?" I asked straight-on.

" Hold back? What do you mean?" She faked an even more puzzled expression.

" Don't play games with me, Matsushita-san. Do you realize the situation we are in?" I asked her.

Before she could say anything, I decided to continue,

" Holding back your abilities in this situation will only worsen our lives. Maybe even lead us to death. Do you understand the consequences?" I asked.

" I'm not holding back, Horikita-san--"

" I told you to stop playing games." I glared at her. And her mouth immediately drew a thin line and soon after that, I noticed a tear of sweat dripping down the side of her head.

Her gaze lowers to the table, specifically at the glass of water in front of her.

" Why do you hold back?" I softened my tone this time.

She releases a sigh.

" I.....I don't know what to tell you. I have no excuse, really...."
She admits, guilt audible in her tone.

She smiles softly, though not one of happiness or the like,

" I don't have a sob story like some character in a novel for my actions. None of that." She chuckles, " The only explanation I could give you from the bottom of my heart; is that it's just a bad habit of mine." She says.

" Why?" I uncrossed my arms and gently placed them on the table.

" Tell me, what is your impression of me, Horikita-san?" She asks.

As she said that, I began to collect my thoughts carefully. She expects me to be honest and thus I will give her my honesty.

" You're quite perceptive, I must say. It was evident during the first game, you were the girl who seriously asked valid questions and presented plausible opinions during our group discussions. I didn't think much of it at the time, but now I'm beginning to realize that there must be more to your intelligence than I'd initially thought. "

" Is that so?"

" Yes, and another impression I had of you, although I don't care much of it, was about your beauty. You're beautiful, Matsushita-san. Your communications skills easily surpasses mine." I said.

" So in short, your impression of me was that of a smart and beautiful girl?" She asks and her gaze shifts from the table to me.

I nod.

" That's exactly what my parents tell me. That's exactly what previous schoolmates told me back in junior high. ' Smart' and ' Beautiful'. Heh, why am I not suprised." She says, in a sad amused tone.

" What's wrong with that?" I asked, not understanding her.

" Nothing. It's just my little childish, selfish, desire. " She waves her hand. " To be seen as someone beyond just beautiful and smart. "

" Is that why you downplayed your abilities?" I raised a brow. " To showcase other sides of you and emphasize on it?"

She nods. " I want to be seen as someone fun to be around. Someone outgoing. Someone.....important even without the beauty and academic ability. "

Matsushita-san operated on shifting the opinions of others around her, to how she wants to be seen. She didn't want to be defined by her profitable qualities, rather, she wanted to be treated like everyone else....to be seen as more than or maybe even less than. A person tired of being aligned to one single definition. Gifted in things most girls our age desires.

" I understand." I said before releasing a sigh.

" You understand, but you don't agree, right?" She asks.

" Yes." I confirmed.

" As expected." She chuckles again. " It's okay. I'll make sure to not hold back from here on out. Thank you for....confronting me about this. I'll fix this habit of mine and--"

" Matsushita-san, please grow up."

" Huh?"

" Garnering sympathy from me is childish."

" I-I'm not---"

" Yes you are. Deep down, you expected me to sympathize with you. But in actuality, you've only given me stupid reasoning as to why you did things the way you did." I bluntly stated.

" Wha--" I didn't let her finish.

" Holding onto such a childish sentiment will do nothing for this class. If you decide to waste your talents and hide it behind the pathetic excuse of ' bad habit', then expect to be sacrificed in the

near future." I stood up from my seat. I purposefully used the word 'sacrificed' since expulsion in this school seems far from likely.

She looked at me with shocked eyes. She was in disbelief. I glare at her.

" If you're not useful to this class. Then expect to be discarded from Ayanokoji Kiyotaka's plans. After all, he expects more from you than anyone else in our class. The only reason I'm confronting you personally is because of his belief that there's more to you than meets the eye." I finally spilled the truth.

" W-What...?" She stutters in shock.

" You also suspect him, don't you?" I asked, " He's clearly intelligent but we don't know to what extent and he proved his excellence in fighting as well. And recently, he took on the mantle of ' class leader' and he seems to be focused on winning at all costs. I do not doubt that he wouldn't hesitate to cut off those who simply weigh us down with their worthlessness."

That look on her face. I was spot-on. She HAS suspected things about Ayanokoji ever since he showcased a few of his abilities. And just like everyone else, she doesn't wish to somehow end up on his bad side.

I began to walk past her, " Either continue to be useless or work to be useful. It's all up to you, Matsushita." were my parting words to her, before officially taking my leave....

Suddenly, I hear the chair screech and my wrist was met with her tight grip. I stopped my movement and glanced to her.

"...."

" Have you made your decision?" I asked.

" I'll do it...." She mutters. Her eyes turned to a sharp gaze directed right to me. " Being seen as ' useless' sounds a lot more annoying than being simply seen as someone beautiful and smart. I won't let that be the case. It's unacceptable."

" Good...." I let out a small smile. " It seems there's still some pride to you after all, Matsushita-san."

When you're gifted with something and you are often praised for it, you develop resentment and boredom from your abilities. But with developing resentment, you simultaneously foster a certain pride within your heart. Because you *know* your gifted. So you subconsciously take pride in your gifted features and abilities.

But in order to unlock that pride, one must act arrogant. One must light a fire to burn away that boredom and resentment, and replace it with ambition. I had no problem acting with such character, since I've been that character for most my life. I acted prideful and arrogant with my academic abilities, thinking support from my classmates were an utter waste of time. Even Kikyo knew that.

This is why Ayanokoji tasked me with Matsushita....

To be the flame to burn away all her resentment.....to be the key to unlock her ambition.....to be his messenger in telling Matsushita that if she fails to serve her purpose even with these gifts, then she is truly nothing.

I wonder, Ayanokoji-kun...

The only one left is Karuizawa-san...

But how would you like me to deal with her....

Nagumo PoV

A knock sounded on my door.

I pressed the button next to me and unlocked it immediately without having to stand up and greet the person there. Well, what's the point in doing so when I already knew who to expect. I continued stacking my jenga tower and made sure that it doesn't lose balance. Strategically picking out the weakest blocks and slightly budging the main foundation in order for me to pick out later....

I hear the door close and familiar footsteps approaching....

Followed by a familiar sigh, " Would it kill you to at least greet me by the door?" She complains.

I didn't tear away my gaze from my tower. I continued stacking.

The girl released a small amused chuckle before taking the seat beside me. At the corner of my gaze, I spotted her small hand reaching for one of the blocks in the tower. I quickly slapped it away.

"Ow!" She mutters in pain. Without looking, I could already tell she was pouting at me.

" You'll destroy it." I simply told her.

" Maybe if I did destroy it, then you would actually look at me so we can start our discussion." She says.

I continued stacking regardless....

" Anyways, did you get what I asked?" I softly inquired.

" I have the folder right here." She says.

" Read it aloud for me...." I said, nonchalant. She huffed before following anyways.

" ' Signed by Director Lumine, during the month of December, the day of the 20th, all the grades will come together to participate in the special holiday activities. The venue will be an unusual one and it will take a long journey to reach it. The class from each grade that wins the overall points will receive 3000 class points as their reward and an additional class protection point. Remember to brace yourselves for the fun holiday spirit I'm going to make you endure~!" " she read.

Interesting....

" Seriously, this was very difficult information to get y'know?" I hear her place the folder on the table. " Not only did I have to use up all my private points to get this, I had to endure a video call with the tricky director herself! She forced me to pick from A,B, and C. And this type of information was hidden within one of those three letters! Luckily, I got it right so I expect some gratitude from you, Nagumo." She huffs.

I finally spared her a glance.

I reach out my hand to her.

I pat her head.

" Thank you, Asahina." I said.

" Eh....w-well....better than nothing, I suppose..." She averts her eyes, her face slightly turning red. I retracted my hand and began to reach for my phone.

I proceeded to wire her a certain amount of points as compensation.

[Nagumo Miyabi, current balance: 25,000,000 private points.]

[Transfer amount (1,000,000 private points) to contact (Asahina Nazuna) ?]

[Yes]

[Transfer complete! Current balance: 24,000,000 private points]

" Check your balance, Asahina." I told her as I placed my phone back on the table. I then proceeded back to my jenga tower.

" I don't need to. Knowing you, you probably wired me 1 million." She said.

She does know me well....

" Mhm. Then our business is done. You should head back to your room and get some rest." I advised her.

" Yeah yeah....but before that, can I ask you something?" She said.

" What is it?" I began to anticipate her question.

" How was your talk with Ayanokoji-kun? Did he live up to your expectations? In terms of first impression, I mean." She asks.

Kiyotaka....

" Kiyotaka hides something even I can't figure out. There's more to him than I'd initially thought there to be. A wonderful ally if he chooses, a terrifying enemy if he's set to destroy." I said.

" 'Kiyotaka'? You two are on first-name basis?" She asked, surprised.

I responded with a nod.

" Then.....what are you to him? An ally? or an enemy?" She asks, sounding cautious. When she first heard of Kiyotaka, she didn't have much expectation and as far as I know, she's already teased him a couple times which is likely. But if I'm serious about Kiyotaka being a threat(and I am serious about it) then Asahina knows that it's not a bluff or a joke.

She's hoping that he and I are allies.

" We are neither." I finally picked out a foundation block and carefully stacked it on top. " Currently he and I are in the grey."

She sighs, " I was hoping you'd say ally.....but at least we aren't enemies. But...." I feel her gaze shifting to the folder, " If you two

don't become allies by then....."

" It's only if he chooses to challenge me by then." I gave her the tiniest bit of assurance. " I already told him that I wouldn't hold back when he does."

" Yeah...." She releases another sigh of relief. " I have faith in you, Nagumo-kun. " She said.

....

" Good night, Asahina." I said to her.

" Good night." She said to me back. She finally stood up and left the room.

Faith.....

That's right, the students in my year also follow the same faith. Faith in me to achieve victory.

It's said that a person who is powered by the faith of others, can do anything. Because they are unable to possess the desire to shatter it.

I wonder....

*What's the feeling that powers **you**, Kiyotaka?*

Horikita PoV

Today is a Sunday.

Yesterday, I managed to successfully retrieve Matsushita and on the other end, Sudo and Kikyo, successfully retrieved Ijuin and Hondo without problems. We had a study session yesterday with everyone except Karuizawa, and in my opinion, it felt like true progress this time. A few curveballs here and there but not too problematic to fix, especially when Matsushita is no longer holding back her academic ability.

Now, the only person left to worry about is Karuizawa. All the study groups within Class D had submitted their progress reports and so far everyone's looking good except for my group. Our progress was the slowest and we weren't even complete. I'm looking to change that today in hopes of better progress next week.

Now....

I dialed a certain someone's number. The number I asked Kikyo to send me.

He picked up.

" Hello?"

" This is Horikita." I quickly introduced.

" **Oh! Horikita-san. This is a surprise.....**" On the other end of the line, was Hirata Yousuke-kun. The boyfriend of Karuizawa.

" Yes, it's quite a suprise indeed. Who knew I would personally call you like this, but this is important." I said.

" **What is it?**" He asked.

" I'd like you to call Karuizawa-san and inform her that you'd be waiting near the department store in Keyaki Mall. But in reality, it will be me who'll meet her there. And don't tell her that I'll be the one waiting for her."

" I see.....is this your attempt of getting her back in your group?"

" Isn't it obvious?"

" **Haha! I suppose it was, but I just had to make sure. Anyways, I'll do it. "**

" Thank you."

(1:30 pm....)

I waited by the entrance at the department store.

Any second, Karuizawa should be arriving....

" Tsk, where is Hirata-kun...." My ears quickly picked up on a familiar mutter. My eyes scanned the area in search for the girl with the blonde hair styled in a ponytail.

I slowly approached her, fortunately enough she wasn't in the middle of the hustle and bustle of students in the mall. She was near one of the tree spots with the benches. And she is yet to notice my approach, her eyes were fixed on her cellphone.

" Karuizawa-san." I finally arrived in front of her.

" Huh?" She looks up from her phone, she looked suprise but her face immediately formed a sour expression upon registering my identity. " Oh.....it's *you*. " She grimaces.

I crossed my arms. " I assume Hirata-kun called you here?" I asked.

" Huh? How did you....." She looked confused but I can feel the cogs in her head turning. Her eyes widened in realization. " You....you both--"

" Set you up to come here? Yes, we did." I said.

She stands up quickly and glares at me with contempt. " I'm leaving." She huffs before turning on her heel.

However, I wasn't going to let her slip. I quickly grabbed her wrist and tugged her back, her movements halted and she looked at me with more annoyance.

" Return to our study group." I said.

" With the most stuck-up tutor in the world? No thanks." She responds with sass.

Ugh, she frustrates me. This is why I saved her for last, just by opening her mouth she can effectively erase my patience. But I must persevere and make use of her for Ayanokoji-kun.

" I know we started off the wrong foot. But I'd like you to give me another chance, Karuizawa-san. I promise, I won't be as overbearing--"

" No thanks." She said as she pulled her wrist back with all her strength. I let her go and muttered a small 'tsk' in response to her pertinacious behavior.

She began to walk away. Fully intending to leave. I quickly scouted our vicinity and noticed that most of the students are beyond hearing range for what I'm planning to say.

I took a deep breath.

" If you refuse to come to my study group. You'll be sacrificed." I said aloud.

She stops and turns her head to me.

".....Sacrificed...?" I can tell there was fear and confusion in her tone.

I nodded and began walking towards her.

" That's right. Ayanokoji-kun says he will lead the class to victory, yes? " I stopped right behind her. Her back was still turned. " I've no need to doubt that if ever there is a game that requires sacrifice.....Ayanokoji-kun will not hesitate to sacrifice the deadweights."

"...."

" Karuizawa-san, you confessed to us about your past history of severe bullying. It was horrifying to hear and you have all my sympathy.....however, using that as an excuse to be useless and endanger our lives in this type of school is unforgiveable." I said.

".....You don't understand how it feels, Horikita-san. " She turns to me. " I came to this school to escape my pain. I secured a good position but then the director pulled this!" She sways her hands arounds, " Everyone is in a life or death situation....and now I'm confused on what to do...."

" If I go back to being the person I was.....I'll be weak.....I'll be reminded.....but if I continue to be ignorant then.....I will die....others will die." She clenches her fist.

" Are you not scared of death, Karuizawa-san?"

" Why should I.....when I had already considered doing that a long time ago.....after being used repeatedly....after shattering to pieces.....I'm suprised I'm still alive today..." She said in a somber tone.

" Maybe because you're not that weak as you say you are."

" But I'm worthless.....everything from me has been tainted. Even my virginity. " She tries to hold back herself from breaking down in front of me. It was all in her tone of voice. " Even...e-even if I'm not weak.....I'm dumb.....I'm impure.....I.....I'm nothing. No matter how hard I try....to keep this character---I'm still nothing...."

" I'm not....like you, Horikita-san....I'm not strong.....I'm not useful....I'm....I'm nothing." She breaks down in tears.

It immediately gathered the attention of a few students. I quickly rushed to her side and awkwardly placed my hands around her in an attempt to seem like I was comforting her.

" You're not ' nothing'. That's only how you see yourself.....listen closely, Karuizawa-san, " I leaned in closer to her ear. " Even without the facade. The fact that you are alive today, is enough reason for me to determine that you're not at all weak. You chose to live. You chose to find a way out and for a while you did."

" But now, everyone including you, is trapped in this hellish place. Everyone is choosing to be strong. But there is only one person in our class who I believe is stronger than everyone else and that is Ayanokoji-kun. Add your strength onto his. He needs to gain full trust and control of the class." I whispered.

" Y-You....mean my influence on the girls?" She asks.

" Exactly." I said before distancing my face.

" You can be useful, Karuizawa-san. You can prove that you're not worthless and I assure you that Ayanokoji-kun will do his utmost best to provide protection for those he deems useful. As long as you can keep being useful to him. Besides....." I tilted my head. " Even if there is a way out of this hell, only a bigger hell will be waiting for you outside. You don't have the best relationships out there, after all..." I said.

She let out a small gasp from realization. Indeed, there was no other way, no other choice left but to comply. If she refuses, then she will be discarded from his plans and die. If she somehow figures a way out (not likely) then what's the point? She'll simply go back to her horrible parents and endure even more punishment while also returning to a school that may or may not consist of the people she once knew. Yes, for her, the outside is just another hell.

*Karuizawa Kei is **trapped**.*

.....

When did I start thinking this way....?

As if....I'm some sort of predator trapping its prey.

This isn't me, right?

*I'm just a **mirror** of what Ayanokoji-kun would've done....right?*

No, don't think about that now. I need to stay in character. The process is almost complete.

".....I have no choice, do I...?" Karuizawa mutters the inevitable.

She would've had a choice, if she truly had no will to live. If she truly proved to be worthless and weak because then that would mean she'd be given the choice to end her own life. It's still a bad choice but at the very least it would've been by her own hand.

However, she adopted a strong character. She adapted to this environment, albeit a little rough.

That's why Karuizawa will choose to live.

" Fine.....I'll do my best to be useful...." She said in a low tone as she began wiping away her tears.

" That's good, Karuizawa-san. You made the best choice."

I've done it, Ayanokoji-kun.

I've gotten close with the three main priorities in a way.

Now it was my turn for me to wait. To wait for his return.

To see if I'd made the best choice.

Nagumo PoV

(Saturday)

I look at the clock.

10 pm....

I stacked one more jenga block atop the tower....

" Hm..." I hummed as I examined the results.

At the very bottom of the tower, was one single jenga block facing vertically. This block was its entire foundation. All its weight, all its burden, is being placed on that one single block and if someone were to pick it off or move it even the slightest.....everything will tumble down along with it.

I released a sigh and leaned back on my seat, staring at the ceiling.

Tomorrow, the first years will return back to Japan.

Japan is 8 hours ahead of London.....so if they decide to leave early tomorrow, because the flight should take 13 hours to travel from here to Japan.....that means they will have arrived at monday noon.

.....

I looked to my window, revealing the nightly atmosphere.

Perhaps I should indulge myself in the night air. I haven't done so in a while.

I exit the elevator and walked across the lobby. I made eye contact with the receptionist and she immediately understood my intention, with a simple press of a button the door quickly unlocked. I nodded in gratitude before making my way out through the door. I took a right, there was a path leading to this hotel's wonderful gardens.

The moonlight shined upon the area, giving the flora around me a wonderful glow....a nightly glaze that the day couldn't ever produce. It felt ethereal. Hands in my pocket, I walked deeper into the garden and at its very center was a wonderful fountain. I walked towards it and stood beside it.

I released a sigh as I began to inhale the calm nightly air. I closed my eyes, taking long breaths to clear my head. It's been a while since I felt myself loosening up.

Most people would opt for a wonderful silent night....

But I think otherwise, since I appreciate the sounds of the crickets and the nightly breeze that seldom shakes the trees. Being able to hear such a wonderful rhythm is a gift. A gift that only night can bring.

" Fancy seeing you here, Nagumo-senpai!"

My nightly seclusion was then interrupted by another presence. I slowly turned my gaze towards the person who called me, and it was none other than the other first year, who goes by the name of Ichinose Honami.

She walked towards me with a smile.

A fake one.

" This is the first time we've encountered each other, senpai." She bows politely.

" Mm." I hummed in agreement.

She looks at me with the same cheerful persona, " I'm glad I was able to meet you for the first time before we have to return to Japan tomorrow!"

I stayed silent. I just returned my gaze to the garden.

" Senpai? Are you deliberately ignoring me?"

" Perhaps. After all, you aren't a genuine person, Ichinose." I replied.

" Eh? What do you mean?" She feigned confusion.

" You are a terrible human being." I stated my true thoughts.

" "

" "

She felt the weight behind my words. She knew acting dumb was futile against me. Ever since....that incident.....I made sure to always determine whether the person is genuine or not with absolute precision. Being betrayed, especially from someone you almost considered family....it was the worst feeling I'd felt back then.

Even thinking of that person causes anger to swell inside.

"So Nagumo-senpai saw right through me, huh...." She says, amused.

" ..." I didn't respond.

" You had a one-on-one talk with Ayanokoji-kun the other night, didn't you?" She said.

That caught my attention, but I didn't speak just yet. I hear footsteps approaching the spot beside me. Once she did, I felt her gaze focusing the side of my face, she was trying to arise a reaction from me.

" Is it because between Ayanokoji-kun and I, he's the stronger?" She asked, curiously.

Stronger? No.

He's the strongest.

" He might seem stronger to you, senpai. But during our little date, I managed to discover a small weakness of his. A small piece of his past that managed to break his stoic expression. You should've seen it!" She says in an excited tone.

" You must've received news, right? From the first death game? After all, why else would you suddenly take such interest in a bland-looking student such as him? If I'm wrong on that, please do correct me." She continues to speak her mind. Her mind full of lies.

" While I do agree that Ayanokoji-kun IS an intimidating foe.....it's not impossible for someone like me to beat him--"

" You're wrong."

" Hm?" She stopped mid-way and looked at me curiously.

I shifted my gaze towards her.

" Someone like you, the apprentice of an evil person, can never beat someone like him. " I state.

" Apprentice? What do you--"

" You speak just like the director. " I interrupt, " But unlike the director, you choose to manipulate situations into your favor with lies and countless plans of deception. You form a character for yourself, a good and reliable one, in the eyes of others."

" The director speaks of truth. While you speak nothing but lies." I said to her.

She grins, unaffected by my words. Rather, she looked almost proud. " You're amazing, senpai! as expected of a veteran in this harsh environment."

" But....are you perhaps implying that Ayanokoji-kun is NOT a

horrible person?" She tilts her head.

" I never said that." I shook my head, " In fact, regardless of his true moral alignment, he will beat you in the end. You say you've cracked his expression?"

She nods.

" Then he truly deems you his enemy. You're nothing but an obstacle in his path."

" That's amazing though!" She smiles crazily, " It makes everything interesting--"

" You underestimate the lengths he would go to. Depending on how he feels, he will either choose to win with a victory that does minimal damage to the obstacle.....or he will choose to win with a victory that will absolutely destroy the obstacle that once stood." I continued,

" I do not know much about Ayanokoji Kiyotaka. Surely, you may know about him a lot more than I do.....but you overestimate your own knowledge. You poked the sleeping beast." I leaned closer to her ear,

" And now he's wide awake, ready to destroy everything in his path."

I distanced myself and observed her expression. For a minute, it was a huge contrast to her earlier expression. For once, she wasn't smiling and her eyes didn't glimmer with a psychotic arousal. She looked confused.....questioning.....and paranoid.

" You may have discovered a weakness of his but...." I sighed as I began walking past her.

" He most likely discovered a weakness of yours as well."

But as I was about to leave the gardens, Ichinose spoke once more.

" You seem to hold a lot of faith in Ayanokoji-kun, senpai!" She chirped.

I stopped without looking at her.

Faith?

No, you misunderstand.

" Kiyotaka is not someone who operates with faith. It doesn't matter whether I or people have faith in him or not. He *will* win. He *will* beat you. If I were to guess.....to him, *winning is paramount*. " I said.

"...." I didn't hear any further responses from her this time.

Well then, I should head to bed.

" Have a good rest, Ichinose." I said before leaving.

Ichinose PoV

You sound so confident in him....

I'm only doing this, actively seeking war with Ayanokoji, simply for Mistress's entertainment. But it would be a lie to say I wasn't interested in him too.....that I wasn't **competitive** as well.

Sure, maybe Ayanokoji-kun will eventually....inevitably defeat me. But I can never truly lose. After all, as long as Mistress Lumine is entertained.....he can kill me for all I care. And Ayanokoji-kun knows that too, that he would definitely need to find a weakness.....but he couldn't. He failed.

What did you say to me, Senpai?

That he most likely discovered a weakness of mine as well?

I wonder about that. Quite interesting to think.....however, I believe that he hasn't. He's yet to discover a weakness in me. Even if he did, will he truly be able to expose it? I'm keeping an eye on him the same amount he's keeping an eye on me. We were locked in a stalemate but I broke it.

He was arrogant, after all.

Thinking in his head, that I could never make him crack. Thinking that the battle was over, thinking that it would end in a stalemate where he ends with zero losses, but he was wrong. He gave me an opening and it was all because he'd been playing too much defense. Haha! But then again.....I, too, am arrogant. Impatient, even.

But, you know what they say....

" The best defense is a strong offense."

It's a wonderful saying and it makes complete sense to me!

Why defend yourself, when you can always just destroy their opportunities of attack by attacking first?

I want to see how much I can push Ayanokoji-kun. I provoked the beast purposefully, I want to see his real abilities. His true self. The self that no longer lies on a daily basis.

Ayanokoji-kun lies to himself. He's been holding back up till this point. I want to see if he can truly back-up his arrogance, I want to know the true excitement he brings to Mistress at all costs. I will do anything to unlock his cage.

How long will it take before he can start forcing me to defend?

(Japan, Monday, 8 AM)

Third Person PoV

All the students of Class D were seated. And to the surprise of many, there was quite an unusual sight to see in this defective class.

All of the students were looking at their review papers and other relevant materials in preparation for the midterms.

There was minimal conversation.

Everyone was focused on memorizing and studying each topic for the different subjects.

' Today, Ayanokoji-kun will most likely return.' Horikita thought to herself as she read her papers.

She feels relieved that the true leader of the class was finally coming home. Well, she wasn't exactly sure if he'd return but she just has a sudden hopeful feeling....a sure feeling that he will return today.

' I want to sleep....' Sudo complained in his head as he tried to read the math notebook Horikita told him to read.

' Hm....these topics are unexpectedly difficult in some form....' Matsushita thought as she read the notes.

' Don't look at your phone, Kei. You need to focus dammit!' Kei steeled her mental drive into NOT looking at her phone to check the latest trends or interrupt her gyaru group for some conversation.

Kushida looked over her classmates and smiled to herself before looking at Horikita.

' Things are going well....' She noted in her head.

Soon, the peaceful silence of studying was interrupted by the door sliding open.

Everyone looked towards Chabashira who had just entered the classroom.

" Good morning, Class. I have an announcement to make so please put down your books and listen closely." Chabashira spoke.

Everyone immediately followed and placed down their books. They silently waited for the announcement.

" You have been promoted to **Class C**. Your current class point balance is no longer in the negatives. It is an exact **0** amount." She announced.

" HUH? REALLY?!" The class erupted in suprise and confusion.

They've been kicked down to the negatives after the second game. They felt absolutely relieved that they were no longer in that area.

' O...? But...the midterms didn't even start....' Kushida thought.

' There's only person who could have done this...' Hirata chuckles.

' Ayanokoji-kun.....' Horikita thought in shock.

(Class D, Sakayanagi's class . Balance: -600 class points)

" What the hell...? How?!"

" What happened? Could the director have picked favorites or something?!"

" That's bullshit!"

The former Class A students expressed their disbelief and anger at this sudden change. How did Hirata's class gain 600 class points so quickly? They erased their negatives!

Hashimoto, a blonde haired student, whistled smoothly in response to the news.

"Jeez, that class is a bit abnormal, don't cha think, princess?" He looked towards Sakayanagi.

Sakayanagi simply gave him a look. Hashimoto quickly turned away, feeling awkward with the lack of verbal response.

'So he's beginning to make his moves...' She thought.

(Class B, Ryuen's class. Balance: 140 class points)

"Are you kidding me...?" Ibuki Mio said aloud.

"Could it have been that Ayanokoji guy you told us about, Ryuen-san?" Ishizaki asked.

Ryuen narrowed his eyes at the announcement on the board. He wondered about the survey program the moment it was announced. There was never any mention of a reward for those selected to

participate in it, but he knew deep down that there had to be and there is. But to gain 600 class points?

" Tch. What a missed opportunity. If only one of us were to have been selected too." Ibuki crosses her arms.

" Well...would we even stand a chance against Ayanokoji and Ichinose? They were both selected, right? Even if one of our classmates were to have joined--" But Ishizaki was interrupted.

" What? Are you scared, Ishizaki?" Ryuen interrogated with a mocking tone.

" Of course! I mean....from what you told us.....both of them are monsters!" Ishizaki retorts.

" And so what? Who cares? In this school, you gotta keep fighting in order to win, regardless how strong the opponent may be." Ryuen rolls his eyes, " It'll take a shit ton of time but we'll get there eventually.....after all.....we've got a newly polished weapon of our own, don't we."

The magenta haired turned his head towards a girl with silver hair. The girl was reading a book but a few seconds later, she began feeling Ryuen's gaze and so she looked up from her book to meet Ryuen's eyes. She nodded to him.

" Shiina? Are you sure she's even that good enough to help us stand toe-to-toe with the other classes?" Ibuki questions, her eyes looking towards Shiina and back to Ryuen.

Ryuen chuckles. " I can only do so much with my brain alone. We need someone who's not only book smart, but can also process all possible situations at a more efficient rate. Better than me, I suppose. And Shiina can do just that." He said with full confidence in the inconspicuous student.

" Still--" Ibuki was up to argue but then she was quickly interrupted by the girl in question.

" Ibuki-san, I can assure you that in due time, we will rise." The girl named Shiina spoke calmly.

Her light purplish eyes met with Ibuki's pair.

" Patience is key. Let the war rage on while we wait for the perfect moment to strike."

(Backtrack to Saturday, 10:45 PM in London....)

Nagumo entered the lobby. He was just about ready to ride the elevator to his floor but someone's presence in the lobby made him halt.

He looked towards that someone.

That someone was sitting on one of the couches, but the figure quickly stood up and made his way towards Nagumo.

They stood face to face. Nagumo didn't expect this interaction but it was a pleasant surprise.

" Nagumo-senpai. Why don't we play a game?" It was Ayanokoji Kiyotaka who had waited for him.

'A game?' Nagumo wondered what Ayanokoji was plotting....

CHAPTER END!

Been working on this chapter for like....5 days?

Being preoccupied with other things to do....plus my laziness when I finally have nothing to do. It sucks lmao.

Anyways, next chapter will be Nagumo's last appearance until the timeline reaches December.

I swear, whenever I was writing this fic's Nagumo.....some Nagumo x Kiyō fluff keep popping in my head.

Someone should make a Fem!Nagumo x Kiyō one day. Where Fem!Nagumo is in Kiyō's year preferably.

Just imagining their duo dynamic dominating other classes sounds absolutely appealing!

Anyways, see ya next episode!

SadisticPaimon, out~! (Lumine is still in vacation!)

S2. Episode 7: A different 'him'

Nagumo PoV

(3 am)

" Nagumo? What are you doing here?" Kazumi inquired as I approached the three of them. Her, Ichinose, and Kiyotaka. They were just about to leave for the airport.

" Senpai? Come to to say farewell to us?" Ichinose smiles.

I ignored the both of them and headed straight to Kiyotaka. There was something I wanted to give him before we part temporarily. I can feel Ichinose and Kazumi's curious gazes staring holes behind my back as I neared my target. Kiyotaka notices me and lets go of his bag, hearing it plop on the ground next to him as he turned to me with a questioning gaze.

" Miyabi-senpai. " He greets me.

" Kiyotaka," I stopped in front of him. I looked towards the car behind him before shifting my gaze back to him. " Apologies for slightly delaying your departure, but I have something I'd like to

give you as a parting gift."

He cocks a brow and tilts his head silently waiting.

I took something out from my pocket, his eyes widened a bit in recognition of the thin object. I showed it to him and his gaze lingered on it in confusion before shifting back to me.

" The King of Spades? You're going to give that card to me?" He asked.

I nodded and handed it to him. He accepted it and glanced at it before he looked back to me again. " Why?" He had asked.

" Because....." I released a sigh before continuing, " Do you know the reason you lie to yourself?" I asked.

" Because I am dissatisfied with who I am." he answered. It was the right answer. No, it was the only answer we both knew.

" That's right." I nod. " People lie to themselves and to others in order to gain what they desire. Approval, reputation, reliability, trust, and change. People often lie so others can have a reason to like them. But....that's not true. Not at all. Do you know why?" I ask.

" I've already answered that, didn't I? I lie to myself because I am dissatisfied with who I am. This also applies to others....to the majority who lie." Kiyotaka answers effortlessly.

I grinned. " I'm just making sure that you're catching on."

He nods slowly in understanding. People lie to others and to themselves to gain approval from others. But where does that approval go? Whom does it affect? The answer is already there. It affects the person who decided to lie. People lie to feel better about themselves because humans....in their deepest core....are very competitive creatures. If you lose too much, you begin to hate yourself. If you win too much, the effects will remain strong in the long run and you'll develop a sense of confidence and love for yourself.

People who tend to lose will always envy those who tend to win.

" Senpai, are you perhaps implying that I'm a loser?" He asked me.

" What do you think?" I asked back.

He was silent for a moment. Seemingly, contemplating, analyzing my current choice of words. But it wasn't for long until he began to speak once more, this time his tone wasn't blank, instead it was filled to the brim with subtle confidence, assurance, and honesty.

" I don't think I am. " He said. " But if I was, then my motive to win will be even stronger. Those who tend to win will never know the meaning of what it's like to lose but they will continue to harbor a fear of it and thus continue winning. On the other hand, the losers, never knew the taste of victory and that fact inspires them even more to improve and win in the future. Because they're tired of losing. In that sense, even if I were this one or that, nothing will change. Do you know why?" He asks me.

" Because in the end, whether or not you are a natural-born winner or a natural-born loser....." I looked deep into his gaze. " You will always strive to achieve victory. Because that's human nature, correct?" I answered.

" Spot-on." He replies.

I chuckled before adding one more thing to say, " That card. Keep it with you, always. Until you feel the need to tear it."

His brows furrowed at my words, " Feel the need to tear it? Why? And when?"

" That card represents who you are at heart. You're confused with yourself. You have a sense of direction, but what location are you trying to arrive to? You don't know. And that's because you have no true understanding of your heart. " I then took out my own card. The king of clubs.

" This card. My card, the King of Clubs, it represents strength, power, and confidence. The three qualities that make up a leader. I'm satisfied with who I am, and that's why I personally do not feel the need to tear my card." I then place the card back in my pocket.

" But you are not content with yours. When you finally find yourself, when you truly feel satisfied with the person you've become. You can tear the card and start anew, or keep it as a reminder of how far you've changed. I know you dislike lying to yourself, Kiyotaka." I sighed again, " And for one to change, it takes an unmeasurable amount of effort in searching.....but in the end it'll be worth it. So continue defying your own trickery. Continue your path to change." I encouraged him.

It was silent between us as he gazed at his card with a look I couldn't see through. He stuffs the card gently in his pocket before nodding to me. " Sure, I'll remember that. Thank you, Miyabi-senpai."

" Just Miyabi is fine." I reminded him. I had no need of honorifics when it came to him.

" Right, thank you, Miyabi." He quickly corrected.

He and I then settled for a quick handshake as the final farewell or 'see you later'. We then hear a loud yawn from behind me, her figure approaching between us with a tired look.

"Are you two done yet?" Kazumi asked. "Can we please get going? The two of you can have your BL moment some other time." She grumbles.

"BL?" Both Kiyotaka and I questioned at the same time.

"Huh? You two don't...?" She looked surprised herself.

What in the world is BL?

Kazumi then frantically waves her hand in a dismissive manner as soon as her composure returned, "Ah, whatever. Forget about what I just said." She quickly says, "So are you two done now?" She asked again, changing the direction of conversation.

"If Miyabi-senpai no longer has anything he wishes to declare to

me." Kiyotaka answers, giving me a side-eye.

" My business is done." I confirmed. " I've said all I needed to say. I apologize for delaying your departure, Kazumi-san." I bowed my head apologetically before leaving the both of them.

" Let's go?" I hear Kazumi say.

" Yeah." I hear Kiyotaka respond.

I assume they were packing their bags in the car now. As I approached the elevator, I quickly realized that there was one other person who hasn't moved from her position ever since I had arrived. It was Ichinose.

I stopped as soon as her smile aimed towards me in delight.

She approaches me, laying her hand out for a handshake.

" Till next time, Nagumo-senpai~" She says.

I accepted her handshake and shook hands with her.

" You didn't spill any revelations to Ayanokoji-kun, yes?" She asked me and stared me dead in the eye.

" Revelations?" I parroted in question.

I was then reminded of the game between me and him that was taken place a mere few hours ago.....

I chuckled after forming my response in my head.

" If anything, it was him, who had spilled some big revelations to me." I said.

Ichinose's eyes narrowed in suspicion but she commented no further. This was one of the few rare times where she isn't hiding behind a mask. If only she acted like her true self instead of following a murderer's ideals. Then she'd prove to be an interesting

person to have an alliance with, similar to Kiyotaka.....but she already chose her path and the path she chose differs to mine greatly.

" Farewell and good luck, Ichinose." I said.

" Thank you, senpai." She replies before picking up her bag and walking past me. I glanced back at her departing figure for a moment before quickly turning my attention to the elevator. I intended to return to my room as of now and take a bit more rest.

I arrived to my room.

I plopped onto my bed, hastily pulling up the covers as I laid down on my side. I wasn't usually this sleepy, in fact, I'm well-versed in staying up and not sleeping for a few days and still remain energized somewhat.....however, on this particular morning, I felt oddly tired.

I am in need of much needed rest....

Knock!

Knock!

Knock!

I sighed to myself. The incessant knocking from the door didn't seem like it was going to stop anytime soon. There's only one person I know who has the gall to bother me at 3:10 in the morning. I really wanted to ignore and buzz off but it's better if I humor her now rather than later. With that in mind, I slowly got up from my bed and approached the door.

I opened it. "Asahina, what're you doing still up?"

"Did you seriously give away 600 of our class points to-"

"Wah!" Asahina squealed in surprise when I interrupted her by grabbing her wrist and pulling her inside my room. I quickly closed the door and she looked at me with a bewildered expression. 'What the he?' 'Why did you do that?' 'You could've just warned me!' were probably her thoughts, but she already knew better than to

waste time asking that.

Wordlessly, with a flick of my hand, I gestured her to follow me to the living room. She did just that and we both arrived to the couch and sat down.

" To answer your question, " I spoke, " You are correct. I did just that." I confirmed.

" HAH?!" Her face morphed into an expression that expressed even more shock. " N-No way?! But why? HOW?"

" I didn't even think it was possible!" She cried out. Her usual calm and teasing manner flying out the window due to the sheer disbelief.

" Neither did I." I have thought about it too, but I was naive enough to dismiss the idea as soon as it popped in my head. A fault of mine. " But Kiyotaka proved it and thus, here we are." I said.

" But.....how did he...come to such an idea?" Asahina mumbles.

" Figure it out. You're smart too, anyways." I crossed my arms.

" Hmm...." She got into her usual thinking pose. Scrunching her eye brows and placing her thumb and index on her bottom lip as she began her thinking process. It's a habit of hers that I'd called her out on in the past far too many times and each time, she always gets embarrassed about it. But.....ever since....we changed. This just became natural. There was no need for me to call her out on it, nor does she find the need to be embarrassed about a habit such as this.

" Could it be....." She murmured the rest of the words. They were indecipherable. She oughta speak up.

" Hm?" I made a sound to grab her attention. She snapped out of her trance and looked to me with a serious gaze. Something has hit her. " Could it be that Ayanokoji-kun found a loop hole by revisiting the S-system explanation?"

I silently waited for her to continue.

" Like," She begins making random gestures. " There are two types of points. Private points for the individual purposes and Class points for the entire class as a whole. 1 class point is equal to 100 private points. And we are also free to send private points to another person if we choose to...." She then snaps her fingers.

" That's it! This must be it!" She says.

" Hm?" Amused, I tilted my head in question.

" Back to the class point and private point thing. It's been stated that one class point is equal to 100 private points. A Class Point is still a point in this school but of a different kind, additionally, the school never explicitly denied the possibility of Class Points being used as some sort of currency. Currency such as private points have the ability of point transfer in case you plan to give away an amount to another person. So if we begin to think that the same goes for Class Points....then it only makes sense that it's also transferrable. However...."

" What?" I asked.

She looks to me again with a puzzled look. "How would you gain control of the class points? We were never given any authority to manage it whatsoever. So that would easily debunk the theory of it being transferrable....unless....."

Her mind lead her to one name. The only name who holds the power of manipulating our class points if she wishes to.

The name of that grey haired woman with the same colored eyes equal to her strands.

" Correct, " I decided to confirm it early. " We called for Kazumi's assistance."

" I see...." She sighs. It was exactly as she'd thought.

" I've thought of the same idea once. But I never thought it would work.....there were so many factors that led me to assume that it'd be a waste of time to test it out. However, Kiyotaka felt otherwise and decided to push through. And it was well worth it, since it gave him his biggest confirmation yet. And nobody else knows except for him, you, and me." I said.

Asahina then chuckles, " So how did Kazumi-san take it? I assume she was shocked?"

I nodded. " She almost didn't want to try it at all, but after persistent persuasion, she gave in and made a call to.....*that* woman." I didn't dare say the devil's name. I didn't want to be filled with hate right now.

" I see..." Asahina nods in understanding, " One thing still doesn't make sense to me though. "

" Hm?"

" Why would you humor Ayanokoji-kun this way? I thought you simply wanted a talk and a proposal for an alliance...that was rejected. I didn't think you felt obligated to send him 600 class points.....or at the very least, entertaining his little theory that is now proven to be true." She asked.

I wagged my index finger. " Simple. I lost a game to him."

" Huh?"

I placed my finger down. " He challenged me to a game that guaranteed his win. It was sneaky, I must admit. And I knew I shouldn't have accepted but the proposal was just so intriguing.....it'd be a waste to pass up such an opportunity to see a

glimpse of how Kiyotaka works." I said.

" It was worth it. A mutual information exchange." I said with content.

" I...." Asahina pauses as if she was still processing my intentions or ulterior motives, but then released a slow sigh. " I see." She accepted my answer.

" Can I ask one more question though?" She says after a moment of silence.

I nodded.

" I saw your farewell to Ayanokoji a while ago. Why'd you do that?" She asks.

It seems to me that Asahina suspects me of an ulterior motive in saying my farewells to Kiyotaka. Rather than assuming like most other people that I'm simply wishing farewell and good luck to my kouhai, she detects a more hidden motive in seeing me make the effort to say something before our paths separate temporarily. So this is why she was still up. She was watching the entire time.

" You find it strange?"

" I find everything you do strange these days, Nagumo." She deadpanned.

" I suppose you're right..." I muse. She calls me strange but we both know that it's become natural in our relationship. If there is one person I can trust to a certain extent, then it'd be the woman right next to me.

" Well, to answer you.....hm...." I look towards the lamp with strange interest. " There's just something that's been.....bothering me for a while."

" What's that?" She asks.

" Kiyotaka. During the time we played his little game, everything about him, the entire situation felt strange. That's probably one of the reasons I decided to humor him, because I wanted to discover myself what that feeling was trying to convey. Even now, I feel as though I can only speak in the vaguest of terms about it." I said.

" Mind telling me?" She asks, sounding interested.

I looked into her curious eyes. I noticed something about our

position. We were quite close to each other physically. I was already aware that Asahina had the looks, but I severely underestimated how beautiful she actually is until now where I can see her up close.

Now, time to rid myself of such a useless thought. I begin to explain to her.

" To put it in a way that's the most understandable; There were tiny subtle changes in Kiyotaka that could prove something major is about to happen. His demeanor, his tone, his eyes, his choice of words.....these subtle changes had occurred during my observation. You might not notice at first, but if you already got an idea of how he is and saw what I saw then you would also be led to the same way of thinking. Something about him shifted. " I said.

" Is that....a good thing? or a bad thing?"

" That's the question I'm most worried about." I didn't sugarcoat it. I turned away from her and focused my gaze on the card box on the table. " Maybe he changed.....or perhaps he might have reverted back to something. I'm not sure."

" well, whatever it is.....you can do something about it, right?" She asks slowly.

" Don't expect me to stop all the catastrophes, Asahina. I'm still a human, after all. I'm not invincible nor am I powerful enough to shut down a mysterious force. " I sigh. " The best I could do is hope and wait until the time our paths connect again. By then, I'm hoping the odds are within our favor."

" I have faith in you, Nagumo." She said.

" Don't rely on it--"

" Even if we fail, " I then felt her warm hand grab mine. I flinched a bit and looked to her with slight apprehensiveness but she looked at me with a warm smile. " Even if we fail, I'll always have your back."

.....

I then felt her intertwine our hands.

I looked down towards our hands before looking back to her. Only one question was in my mind.

" Why?" She read my thoughts and intercepted the conversation before I had the chance to utter it.

" Simple; You saved my life." She answers truthfully. " And you're the strongest person I know." She adds.

....

Asahina has always been by my side ever since that heinous day. Her loyalty to me after that day knew no bounds. She did what I asked with little to no hesitation, her trust in me is unwavering. Her patience with me is second to none and.....the warmth she provides me after I've turned cold. Nobody else can do that but her.

My one true ally is her. It's always been her ever since.

I cracked a small smile. " Thank you, Asahina." I was serious. She quelled my doubt. She nods to my small gratitude with the same smile. " No problem." She says.

We then let go of each other's hands. But I could still feel the effects of her warmth.

" I have another question to ask you, Asahina."

" Shoot. "

" What's BL?"

".....*Eh?*....."

Horikita PoV

(Monday morning)

" 600 class points....could you believe it!" Kikyo told me with a happy tone.

" Maybe Ayanokoji pulled something off from the other side?" Sudo-kun interjects. Even he seems to believe in Ayanokoji a lot more now.

" I'm a bit skeptical to be quite honest..." Matsushita shares her opinion.

" I don't know Ayanokoji-kun that much besides him being

unexpectedly smart and also boring.....but I'm going to side with Sudo-kun's words." Karuizawa adds.

" Suprisingly enough, I agree. It's highly likely that Ayanokoji-kun has something to do with this." I said my thoughts on the matter.

Suprisingly enough, during break time in the morning classes, I was currently in a discussion with the three main priorities. Sudo, Matsushita, and Karuizawa. Of course, Kikyo is also with me for the ride. I don't know what compelled these three to come directly to me regarding the suprising news.....but somehow I didn't really mind it all that much.

" Ayanokoji-kun really is an amazing person..." Kikyo says.

" But he's scary too, isn't he?" Karuizawa shivers as she said that. " His lack of expression is unnerving me!"

While that is true, it'd be much stranger if Ayanokoji-kun showed a strong facial expression that gives away his emotions.....like that time he beat up Sudo-kun.....that small smile still keeps me on my toes.

" I can understand that, Karuizawa-san. I felt the same way too back then....but Ayanokoji-kun is not a bad person! I'm sure of it." Kikyo says, " He's scary because he cares!"

Do you really believe that, Kikyo?

Or is this your attempt at convincing yourself that he's not all ' bad'?

" Well....whether or not he's a good guy or a bad guy.....I just hope he'll keep his promise." Karuizawa mutters.

" I agree with that." Matsushita says. Sudo also nods along.

I have no reason to doubt that as long as its within Ayanokoji-kun's interest, he will continue to lead us until his goal is achieved.

Otherwise, he might've already decided to drop us.

I looked towards the time. The next class is about to begin. I looked towards my groupmates.

" You should all return to your seats now. Class is about to begin. If you wish, we can discuss further about the matter at a later time." I said to them. They nodded to me and left without making a fuss.

I sigh to myself. I leaned my cheek on the palm of my hand as I stared at my group report updates on my desk.

(12:30 pm)

After eating lunch with Kikyo, we were currently making our way back to the classroom. At this time, the classroom should still be empty since most students would be back by 12:45 and even the loners don't meander here for their entire lunch break. Well, that's also due to the fact that the usual outcasts or loners in our class have gotten quite used to their groupmates and from what's been reported to me, several of them had formed friendships by now.

That's good. This is good overall class progress.

" Ayanokoji-kun should be back by now, right?" Kikyo asked me as we walked.

" That should be the case. But he might be back a lot later than expected, who knows? After having arrived back to Japan. There's bound to be traffic." I said.

" Mhm....fair point." Kikyo nods with her hands resting behind her waist.

I wonder what Ayanokoji-kun has gathered during his stay in London....

Well, it's clear that he must've done something. You don't just gain 600 class points out of nowhere and make it seem like someone from our class had done it while he was away. Ayanokoji is the only lead. The only answer to something like this.

But I'm curious as to what else he might've uncovered.

Kikyo and I arrived to the door of our classroom and I quickly slid it open but then we were met with a suprising presence in the supposed to be empty class.

Both Kikyo and I gasp.

" Ayanokoji-kun?" Both her and I said in unison with the same tone of surprise.

He was there. Standing by my desk and holding up the stacks of paper that contained all the group report updates. He'd been reading it while we were eating?

Kikyo and I silently glanced to each other before stepping inside and sliding the door close. We stared at him but he's yet to return our looks, he looked blank as he read the report papers. And because of that, I instinctively began biting my lip. I felt nervous, something within me was wavering, a feeling that simulated dread perhaps.

Is he....disappointed? I wondered.

Even Kikyo didn't say anything. I can tell she was nervous too. Nervous for me, mainly. Her eyes give it away after all, she's always been genuine. But I already did the best my mind could come up with, I reunited our group, fortified it with Kikyo's assistance.....was that not the right to do? Did Ayanokoji-kun plan for something else? No, that's blasphemous to even think since he, himself, was the one who instructed me to bring this group together prior to his departure. Could it be that he expected better results?

Ayanokoji-kun, you're killing me.

Say something....

Finally, as if hearing my thoughts. His head turned to us, his eyes staring to the both of us with a message I couldn't understand. He places the paper back on my table, returning it to its previous neatly stacked position.

He then began walking towards us.....

He stood in front of us.

I took deep breaths.

Why did the air felt suffocating?

My fear of him....it's even greater than what I initially thought.

" Good job, Horikita...." I suddenly felt a palm softly caressing the top of my head. My breath hitched and I looked up slightly to his expression. But I was met with an even more suprising view....

His lips curled up softly.

Was that....a smile?

" You really did good. The progress reports are amazing." he said. Even his words felt wrong, his tone sounded so light.....

" Ayanokoji-kun....you really think so?!" Kikyo snapped out of her trance and exclaimed as if she was speaking to a ghost.

Ayanokoji lifts his palm away from my head and turned to face Kikyo with the same soft smile. " Yeah, it'd be a lie to say otherwise." He says.

" Phew.....I'm relieved...." Kikyo places her hand on her chest and releases a sigh of relief. Does she not see what I'm seeing? Or is she ignoring it and thinking nothing of it?

But my thoughts were answered when Kikyo gave me a look with a message that said ' this is weird.'

So she finds this obviously strange too.

" I apologize for leaving you under all this pressure, Horikita." Ayanokoji.....bows his head lightly? " Rest assured, from here on out, I'll be the one holding onto the reins. But during times where I need someone else to take the reins, I'll be relying on you if that's okay."

" Sure...." I didn't know what else to say. I was too flabbergasted by this sudden 180 of a shift. The contrast of this Ayanokoji and the one before the trip was like night and day.....

What in the world happened?

Why-- no, wait. Hold that thought. There's another question that needs to be answered right now.

" Ayanokoji-kun, were you responsible for the 600 class points?" I asked.

" Who else? " He points to himself in a confident manner, confirming my thoughts.

What's with his demeanor.....ugh, this feels so.....un-Ayanokoji-kun of a thing to do.

" How?" I asked him.

" Hm...." He looks to the side for a moment, " How long do you think the three of us have before the rest of the students arrive?" He asked.

" About 10 minutes right now." I told him.

His eyes then returned to my direction. " Very well, I'll explain the summary of how things went during my stay." He says before showing us our seats, " The two of you, please sit. This should be kept solely between the three of us."

The three of us?

What's with the sudden tension of confidentiality? I narrowed my gaze before Kikyo pulled me to the seats and had me sit down before I could do anything. Ayanokoji gave Kikyo a small nod of

gratitude before taking a seat himself and Kikyo soon following. It was me and Kikyo facing him, who was the opposite side of the table.

" Well then, let's recount what I found out...." he began to tell us.....

Kushida PoV

" And that's about it." Ayanokoji-kun concluded.

All of that.....it was so much to take in. Nagumo-senpai? Fourth year student Tachibana? The lack of third year students?

All the classes from the second year under Nagumo-senpai's command? And Ayanokoji-kun also confessed to us the method of how he managed to to grab 600 class points.....to think that even class points were transferrable....it's.....wow...

I was amazed by the amount of information Ayanokoji-kun gathered within the week. But he also told us that Ichinose-san also knows most of the stuff he's told us because if it weren't for her

active moves, then the opportunities wouldn't have shined kindly to him. At the very least, Ayanokoji-kun seems certain that even Ichinose-san is not aware of class points being transferrable.

" That's.....amazing, Ayanokoji-kun!" I said with sincerity.

He nodded to me. " Thank you. And once again, I'd like to congratulate you and Horikita's efforts in bringing the main priorities together. " He said....sounding genuine.

This is so strange.....Ayanokoji-kun is saying such strange things....with a not-so-Ayanokoji-kun type of tone.....

Yet weirdly enough, it made me incredibly happy....

" So you met.....the man who killed my brother?" Suzune-chan spoke. I looked to her and Ayanokoji-kun did the same.

"Mmm." Ayanokoji-kun gave a confirmation hum.

Oh no.... I noticed Suzune-chan dripping the edge of the table quite tightly.

".....What's he like...?" She asked.

" He seemed quite decent." Ayanokoji-kun answered within a heart beat.

" DECENT?!" The chair screeched back as Suzune stood up, gripping the edges of the table and her eyes clearly conveying nothing but pure anger.

"S-Suzune-chan! Calm down! " I too began standing up, ready to comfort her and calm her down before things get--

" He is quite a decent man. He's a good person to have a conversation with over a nice cup of tea." Ayanokoji-kun adds.

" WHAT?!" Suzune-chan yells and leans over the table, her eyes glaring into Ayanokoji-kun's now indifferent ones. " HE KILLED A MAN? MY BROTHER! AND YOU'RE TELLING ME HE'S A DECENT GUY?" She yells.

I quickly got behind her and wrapped my arms around her torso, holding her back. I was afraid she might lunge at Ayanokoji-kun or something!

" That's exactly what I'm telling you. If you were there with me, then you'd understand why I'm saying this--" But he was interrupted.

" IF I WERE THERE WITH YOU, THEN THAT MAN WOULDN'T BE ALIVE!" She spoke with venom.

" Suzune-chan! Please, please keep your cool!" I begged. I knew it was wrong of me to ask, after all, she was still sensitive about this. But acting too much on your emotions and risking wrong decisions is not the way to go.

" Tch...." Suzune scoffs and her movements came to a halt. I relaxed my hold on her.

" Will you settle down, Horikita?" Ayanokoji-kun spoke with the same weird light tone he'd been using since he arrived.

" That was my fault for goading you on with such a thing. " He rests his chin on both his palms. " I was just curious to see how much it'd still affect you."

" Huh?" Suzune-chan utters a suprised sound.

" While I did indeed meet Nagumo-senpai and I do understand your anger and hatred towards him. My own opinion of him is still at a neutral stance. But the undeniable fact remains that if it weren't for him accepting my challenge, our class wouldn't have received 600 class points to make up for the exact negatives we were previously under after the second game. I'm grateful for that." he said.

That's right....

Ayanokoji-kun was always the type of person who considered both sides.....he always pieced together the true story before making any sort of judgement. He was blunt with it too. And he doesn't care about worthless things unless they are of use.....

Suzune-chan knew very well of this fact too. Thus, she began to take deep breaths and calmed herself down. I finally let her go once she sat back down on her seat.

"Sorry for yelling." Suzune apologizes. " That was....not mature of me to do." She admits before sighing, " Sometimes I do envy your calm analytical way of viewing things. Nothing seems to affect you, Ayanokoji-kun--"

Suddenly, Ayanokoji-kun interrupts with a much more serious tone.

" All humans are affected by something. Including myself. Tragedies and Success are the two different yet similar concepts that provides a choice for what a person should do next. Should one act cold and fortify themselves with the cost of slowly losing the person you once were? Or should one act on their emotions and make brash decisions within that very moment and then cloud their futures with uncertainty.....or should one remain neutral of everything that happens to them and move based on logic. None of these will truly become the definitive answer because each answer provides different benefits for different people in these same situations. But with your tragedy, Horikita, you must use it as your decisive marker. Let it affect you. Don't shun from it and don't ever forget about it. That way, you will then experience the true concept of ' Success'." he says.

"....." Suzune and I were stunned in silence.

Ayanokoji-kun's words....he meant them. He seriously meant them. It felt moving for me, personally, but I also think it opened another view for Suzune-chan as well. What he says makes sense. Nobody can ever truly act the same, when different people are placed in the same tragic circumstances. They have their own ways to deal and cope with it. Their own ways to move on.

Ayanokoji-kun said all that as if meaning to convey to Suzune-chan that she shouldn't envy his way of thinking. That she should always follow what she believes in at inner most parts of her heart. And decide from there.

" Anyways, let's lighten up the mood, hm?" Ayanokoji-kun as if having flipped a switch, his soft warm gaze returned.

" Our classmates should be here soon. I've yet to greet them." Ayanokoji-kun says and leans back on his chair, " It'd be troublesome for us if they see the three of us in such a silent and gloomy mood. The one thing we don't want is them worrying too much. It's much more beneficial if they continue as they are until I deem otherwise." He said.

" Is that why you only wanted me and Suzune-chan to hear about this, Ayanokoji-kun?" I suddenly spoke because an answer just hit me. " You refuse to tell the others as to not have them fret over the warning signs and lose focus. This is your way of making sure our class morale doesn't drop down again, right?" I asked.

" Correct." Ayanokoji-kun nods.

I smiled. " Then you also told us these things because you trust us with this information, right?" I asked with a hopeful tone.

" No." He denies.

" Eh?" I was confused now.

" That's not the answer, Kikyo...." Suzune spoke.

I look towards her and she glanced to me.

" The reason Ayanokoji-kun told us these things was because he's putting leashes on us."

" W-What...?" I stuttered.

Suzune looks to Ayanokoji-kun.

" You kept it confidential between the three of us because if ever such information leaks, then you'd already have your main suspects. Additionally, aside from the imaginary leash you put on us, you also lowered the chances of information like this ever leaking by not sharing it to everyone because if the whole class knew, then it'd be annoying for you to manage a situation like that entirely and pinpoint the exact traitor if there ever is any. You didn't do this because you trust us. You did this because you don't, and you'd like to have safety measures in place. Am I correct?" Suzune explained calmly.

" Correct." Ayanokoji-kun says.

" But.....I think it's important for everyone to know, right? I understand your reasons, but--" I was interrupted by Suzune chan.

" No. That would just be problematic. Think of it like this; *If the all the country's governments were to spill controversial secrets to its people. Do you think the people will act calmly? They wouldn't. They'd begin to create ideas derived from those secrets and slowly the interpretation of the secrets get worse and worse until the government is eventually ousted by the people they were entrusted to.* " Suzune says.

" The less people know, the less chance that problems will occur." Ayanokoji-kun adds before looking at me. " You have to understand that, Kushida. I'm ultimately doing this for the class regardless of how immoral my actions may be. " He says.

".....Okay...." I conceded.

I thought it'd be better if our classmates knew, but the odds are too great for us to even think of making risky moves. Our class is making good progress but it's far from perfect. No matter how optimistic I act, I can still feel the hidden mistrust within our class, so I can see now why Suzune and Ayanokoji-kun are saying these things.

I just....have to trust this for now. Ayanokoji-kun is our leader.

" Anyways, let's discuss more about the group matters at a later time. Someone is about to arrive through the door." Ayanokoji-kun says.

As if on cue, the door slid open and Ayanokoji-kun's expectations became reality.....however, there was one wrong calculation.

It wasn't just one person.

It was half the class.

" Ayanokoji's back!" They yelled.

Ayanokoji-kun's eyes widened in slight surprised before they went back to their relaxed state. He stood up and waved to them, not in a blank manner, but to our surprise his wave seemed more.....Hirata-like?

" Hello everyone. I read the reports from Horikita. I'm quite happy that everyone is doing well within their respective groups." He said with.....another soft smile?!

" HE'S SMILING?! WHAT THE FU--"

(Much later.....at like dismissal time.....4pm.....at the library. This chapter is about to be finished in like 5 mins--)

Horikita PoV

" Are you seriously okay, dude?" Sudo interrogated with narrowed eyes.

" Hm? Of course I am. " Ayanokoji shrugs. " Why? Is it because of the way I'm acting--"

" IT'S EXACTLY BECAUSE OF THE WAY YOU'RE ACTING!" Sudo yells.

" Shhhh!" The librarian glares at our table and Sudo bowed apologetically before sitting back down. I sigh to myself, there's still a long way to go in training his emotional resistance.

" Settle down, Sudo-kun...." Matsushita sighs.

" Right, right...sorry..." he mumbles.

" Hm...I suppose people will find it strange with the way I'm acting now. But I guess my only explanation is that a new door opened for me during my stay in London." Ayanokoji explains.

" Really? You changed that quickly...?" Karuizawa sounded confused. I wonder if she is doubting his explanation. After all, it's difficult to change how one person acts within a week's time. Change to the point where you feel like an entirely different person.

She knows that. And she took her time with it.

" Mhm." Ayanokoji hums in confirmation before glancing at our study material. " Is this the topics needed to be covered for the midterms?" He asks.

I raised a brow. " of course it is." I said.

" Hmm...." He then looks towards the other occupied tables in the library. A few study groups from different classes were using the library as well, but unlike ours, they were rather quiet,

" I see..." Ayanokoji mumbles.

Hondo and Ijuin were still silent. Sometimes I honestly forget they were present in this table. The two of them only talk to me when needed and they usually go into their own conversations which results in a slower output time. They haven't said anything to Ayanokoji yet. I wonder if they're still stuck with the traitor impression they have of Ayanokoji during the first game. I hope it isn't too deep-seeded into their beings, because that would provide issues.

" Horikita, can you help me with this part? I still don't get how it works." Sudo points to a math problem.

" Sure." I said.

" Matsushita.....help...." I hear Karuizawa whisper to Matsushita-san.

" Eh? Again?" Matsushita sighs before going to Karuizawa-san's side anyways and helping her friend with her work.

Meanwhile, Kushida-san carefully observed Ijuin and Hondo's working and encouraging them to talk less and work more in this session so they could show me better results.

Suddenly, I hear a chair moving back. I looked up from Sudo's paper and see that Ayanokoji-kun stood up, hands in his pocket.

" I'd best be going. Do continue doing your best in this group, everyone. And I'll do the same from my end." Ayanokoji says.

" Sure." Everyone said.

" Where are you going?" I asked him.

" I want to take a bit of rest." He points a finger to his head. " I still feel a bit of jet lag. It hasn't gone away yet and I think rest will do me good."

" Oh, you should've said so earlier, Ayanokoji-kun! Nobody would've mind...." Kikyo immediately said.

" Nah. Don't worry about it. I wanted to personally oversee what the other groups were doing before taking rest. Anyways," He turns around and heads for the library exit, " I'll see you all tomorrow."

" See you, Ayanokoji-kun...." I mumbled while Kikyo waved politely.

.....

I still can't get over with the way he sounds and acts now.....

It's like.....a very different ' him'.

I've been thinking that a lot, and it's hard to force out of my head....

Chabashira PoV

My name is Chabashira Sae.

For a long time, I've made many regrets. Many choices I wished to redo.

But....my worst choice? Was letting myself be manipulated by that scum director.

I thought.....she was my friend.

I thought she was the first decent person in my life after my time in high school.

But I was wrong.

She pulled the rug under me, under everyone else, and became the worst person in my entire lifetime.

And it doesn't help the fact that I, indirectly or not, have contributed to it...

I hate myself for it.

Because of such a mistake, I've sold my entire life to keep myself afloat.

But in exchange for that selfish purpose, I put many of my past

students in danger.....and eventually they reached death.

So because of my mistakes, because of my selfishness, I now stand afloat on top of their corpses.

This school.....is an environment that destroys good-willed people.

She turned it like this.

.....

.....

I let her.

I let her.I let her. I let her. I let her.

I let it happen. I remind myself of that every single day....

My students, who have long passed, I am sorry. I am so sorry. I'm such a selfish teacher. A stupid teacher. I failed you all....I'm so.....so.....so....sorry....

.....

I entered the faculty office. It was only me for now. But that's good, the other teachers often come 5 minutes later. The only reason I enter this office is to clock out and pack all the work I need to do and do them at my own private quarters.

As a teacher, I am no longer deserving to place myself next to the other teachers.

They actively tried to stop Lumine's growth in taking over the school while I....watched.

I did nothing but watch.

They gave their best efforts for their students.....while I didn't.

Thud! Suddenly, a pen container fell on the ground. I sighed and bent down to pick it up and placing it back on the table where it once was.

I'd better hurry now....

"Hello? Is anyone here?"

Huh? I heard a voice followed by a few knocks. But then the door slowly opened and I quickly turned my head to see who it was....

"Ah, It's you, Chabashira-sensei." It was Ayanokoji.

I was puzzled. Does he require something?

"Ayanokoji? Do you need something?" I asked.

" Where is Hoshinomiya-sensei, if I may ask?" He said.

Hoshinomiya.....why would he-- no. Why wouldn't he. She's a much better person than me anyways.

Something pained my heart a bit. It seems the tiniest part of me was ever so hopeful that a student will chose to come to me for advice.....but I already threw away that right. I'm not a suitable teacher. I'm just here for my own selfish desire to keep living.....even when i already feel dead.

" She'll be here.....in a few minutes." I answered before reaching for my bag and envelope. " You could wait here or wait outside. " I informed him.

" I see.....thank you." Ayanokoji bows.

" No problem." I said in a bland tone before walking to the exit, intending to pass his figure.....however-

" Actually, could you wait here with me, Sensei?"

I halted. " What. Do you have shy feelings for Hoshinomiya or something?" I said.

" No. But what I'm going to discuss with Hoshinomiya-sensei....it's going to be important." he then turns his eyes to me. " And I feel that it's best if you are present when I do."

" Huh?" I furrowed my brows in confusion. What business does he intend to have with Chie-- I mean Hoshinomiya?

" Please stay, sensei. "

" I have work to do, kid. I can't just humor you and avoid my work." I said.

He sighs. " All right then. How about this," He suddenly nears me. I stepped back but he simply took another step forward.

" I'll tell you a preview of what's going to happen." He said.

" Huh?" I was even more confused but I was quickly silenced when Ayanokoji began to utter his words.....

....

.....

.....

"?!" My eyes widened due to shock as I processed what he just said.

" An interesting idea, no?" he asks.

I noticed his eyes. They're different now. There's.....a tint.....or a glow to them. It looked absolutely malicious....

And the smile adorning his lips.....filled with nothing but amusement and mischief.

And his ridiculous proposal.....

Ayanokoji Kiyotaka....

Why are your eyes scarier than the director's...?

CHAPTER END!

Wew....I'm back!

And my back hurts after writing this.

And would you look at that? A switch of pace with Kiyotaka's character!

If everybody in this fic will contain a change in their story.....then the protagonist deserves his little spice too!

Another Episode 0 will come out later after a few episodes! so be ready for a bit more insight on Kiyo's slightly altered upbringing in this fic.

Midterms/survey arc is almost finished and then we'll move onto my own version of volume 3's island exam! But death game version!

Also ye, you won't see Nagumo's pov for quite a while from here on out! And you also wouldn't see another certain character's pov for quite a while either! Can you guess who I'm talking about? You probably could lmao.

Anyways, im out!

SadisticPaimon leaves the chat~

S2. Episode 8: Choose your truth.

Suzune PoV

**(2 months and a half have passed.....now 2 weeks before
Midterms)**

" What?" I asked, the words failing to process in my mind.

" I'm serious! Groups from Class B (Ryuen's class) and Class A (Ichinose's class) have very different topics to review." Kikyo whispered to me.

Different topics...? But...that couldn't be.

Why this sudden change? Did their teachers inform them of it? Or did they discovered it all on their own.

" Come to think of it...." Hirata-kun places a finger under his chin, thinking, " There were a few students from Class A and Class B that were checking us out in our table a few days ago. They simply asked us about what we were reviewing...."

" And..." I asked for further elaboration.

" I told them the summary of our topics and they just nodded and left." Hirata answers.

"" That's strange behavior.....

" Is something wrong, Horikita-san?" Hirata asks me in a worried tone.

" Hirata-kun, I think the topics for the midterms have changed." I put it bluntly.

" Huh?" His eyebrows raised in surprise. " What makes you--"

" Kikyo told me about Class A and Class B reviewing very different topics for their midterms. " I answered.

" What about Class C?" He asked.

" I'm not sure. I've never seen a single Class C study group anywhere from my end in the library. They must be studying in a more private environment.....but chances are, it's possible that their topics are the same as A and B." I said.

" That....." Hirata leans back on his chair, " Is quite the problem." he sighs.

" Though," He looks to me with curious eyes, " Shouldn't you ask for Ayanokoji-kun's opinion on this? It's imperative that the leader knows."

" I am planning to ask him later but.....I just wanted to gather enough incentives before telling him, after all, he might just brush it off as nothing. The situation needs to be a bit more serious so Ayanokoji-kun is given a reason to act--"

" That's not the right thing to do, Horikita-san. " He interrupts me, " Regardless of the method or the news, you MUST inform Ayanokoji-kun about it. He is our leader. I know that he was the one who brought our negatives to zero, so he's doing his best from his end. We need to do the same by working with him--"

" I know that, but--"

" Then why aren't you telling him?" He asks with a serious expression on his usually soft face.

"....." I looked down at the table. That strange feeling inside me continues to swerve and grow.....it makes me wonder; why AM I not telling him? He should know. I know that he should know and yet....

I get this bad feeling...

It's happened ever since Ayanokoji-kun's return.

" Horikita-san?"

" Hirata-kun..." I finally spoke, " What do you think of Ayanokoji-kun right now?" I asked him without looking.

" What do you mean?"

" I mean.....what type of feeling do you get when you see him. What type of vibe does he radiate to you? That's what I'm asking." I clarify.

" I don't know, really. I can't really say. While I do acknowledge that something about him has definitely changed....." He sighs, " I can't pinpoint what my feelings are. Maybe my feelings will become more clear once we get through the third game where hopefully, his leadership shines."

Then is it just me who's feeling this way?

Something is wrong...

" Horikita-san, I don't understand your intentions in asking me such a question but..." I felt his hand gently propping on my shoulder. " The best we can do as of now; is to trust him and hope it

isn't misplaced. "

"All right. " I released a deep sigh. Hirata's hand quickly retracts from my shoulder while retained my composure. " I'll talk with Ayanokoji-kun AFTER I gather more confirmation for myself from the other groups."

Hirata nods, " If I can't convince you to talk to him right now, then I suppose that's a better compromise. "

" Thank you for your insight."

Perhaps I am overthinking my feelings of him. It shouldn't matter anyways, right? As long as he leads us to victory then I don't deserve the right to complain. I don't know how well Ayanokoji-kun can lead others just yet, but he's the only one in our class that I personally believe to have the highest success rate. That's why I vouched for him when he randomly proclaimed himself the leader the day after the second game.

It's a leap of faith.

" Huh...come to think of it," Yukimura-kun leaned into his palm with a scrunched look, " There have been a few groups from the other classes that took a peek at our table." He said, " And right as I was about to ask what they were doing, they left just as quick. I didn't know what to think of it, but it was definitely suspicious." He looks at me.

" Why'd you ask?" He questioned.

I was thinking of answering truthfully, however, I quickly realized that it wouldn't be a good idea at this time. My lips formed into a thin line, as I debated on what to say. If I do confess my suspicions of this behaviour to Yukimura-kun, then things might turn for the worse. Being thwarted has always been Yukimura-kun's weakness, and whenever things don't go to plan, his insecurities just pop up. And from there, he's completely cut down.

He loses hope too quickly. He loses hope in himself and the class.

But....if I don't tell him, then wouldn't it be a waste of a perfect time to build up Yukimura's mental resistance? This could benefit in the long run but there's also still the high chance that this will set back his development. After all, some people just can't seem to learn new things regardless of the method of teaching. Some people are just too into this or that, and it's hard to break them off of it. Something like addiction or habit.

Not all stubborn people can be out-stubborned.

Not all stubborn people can learn.

But.....I don't know where to classify Yukimura on that spectrum. It's unfair to immediately assume that he's the latter. Should I just tell him? Should I not? Am I overthinking again? Ugh. I don't know what to do.....

What would Ayanokoji-kun do--

In the end, it almost always, leads back to him. My thoughts return to him and only him. He's the only one who could give me the biggest clue or the exact answer depending on his mood. I have that much belief in him that he could solve these things better than me.....but...

I also have a lingering feeling that maybe....all of this.....was--

" Horikita-san?" Yukimura-kun snapped his fingers, and it effectively snapped me out of my own head.

I blinked a few times in realization that I had been silent for the past minutes. I was too engrossed in my own thought process that I'd quickly forgotten about Yukimura. I coughed to myself and decided on my choice.

" I apologize." I looked at him. " I asked because other groups have been experiencing the same thing. " I said. I didn't review the

other groups just yet, but I feel this is the likely assumption, " It's very odd and it grabbed my attention. So I was asking you this, in order to confirm that all groups have been scouted."

Yukimura's eyes widen in worry, " What do you think their deal is?" He asked, his tone laced with slight anxiety.

Keep him calm, Suzune.

" I don't know yet, but I will find out. But for now, I'm requesting that you act the same as always during your sessions with your group. I asked the same for the other group leaders." I said. This was the best way to make sure things don't escalate.

" I will report this to Ayanokoji-kun and get his opinion on the matter. " I said.

" Oh....all right then..." he said.

I made Yukimura aware of a possible threat, but there are no leads to determine what that threat even is. There is no doubt that he is anxious, but at the very least, his faith will be assured within Ayanokoji-kun.

(Dismissal....)

There's no more doubt about it.

Something is most definitely wrong.

And that, I assume, is the sudden change of the mid terms materials needed to be covered. Our class was left out of the equation. We received no news about this change. For now, only Hirata and Kikyo know about my suspicions. I already informed Ayanokoji-kun to stay in the classroom after dismissal, since I had something important to discuss with him.

Once the last group of students finished their small talk and left to their study groups.....

Ayanokoji-kun spoke, " So, " I felt him turn to me. " What is it that you want to discuss with me?" He asked.

I turned to him. " The mid-term material has changed for the other classes. We're the only classes that were left in the dark about it, till now." I said.

" Oh?" He leans his cheek on the palm of his hand. " That's pretty bad, isn't it?" He said, in a soft nonchalant demeanor.

I furrowed my brows, still confused about his weird behavior recently. But I tried to put it aside and continued with what I needed to say.

" It is. This first came to my attention when Kikyo told me about it this morning, that students from different classes came by and took a glance at our study groups, as if to confirm something. What they wanted to confirm was the difference of material. All of the groups from Class A and Class B likely have the same material."

" What about Class C?"

" I don't know. But I assume it's the same for them too." I said.

" And did you confirm the materials that Class A and Class B apparently share? You said they ' likely' have the same material.....that doesn't sound like absolute certainty now, does it?" He said.

"" Tch. He has a point, I'm simply assuming that they have the same material, if I'm wrong then changing our material will be pointless unless we can pinpoint the true topics needed to be covered.

And yet, I don't feel like backing down just yet. Something within me is certain that this is indeed the case.

" I have confidence, Ayanokoji-kun, that this is indeed the case." I spoke, " I understand that following assumptions is a move with high risk. I understand that I should've taken the time to gather more concrete evidence to support my theory, but we only have two weeks." I reasoned.

" I need to do something, regardless. Time is of the essence. Our study groups spent 2 months studying the previously given materials but now that it's suddenly changed, that's a big issue! " I add.

" Then tell me this; What exactly do you plan to do about this situation, Horikita?" He asked me.

" I will confront Chabashira-sensei and have her give us the changed materials. If she refuses, then I'll threaten her using the director." I stated.

" Hoh?" He raises a brow, his eyes suddenly showed interest, " Using the director, you say? Interesting..." He chuckles.

That short chuckle suddenly sent chills down my spine. It's so unnatural....so unnerving. But again, I have to remind myself of the situation that needs to be deal with as soon as possible.

" Do you think it'll work, Ayano--"

" That's for you to find out once you actually do it, Horikita. " He says before stuffing his hands back in the blazers of his pocket. " But I will say this," He says as he begins walking past me.

" In this world, there are always two truths. The one you choose, will become the truth. The one not chosen will become a lie. So..." I felt his gaze side-eying me as he passed, " Choose wisely."

Two truths...?

What in the world does he mean by that?

" Wait, Ayanokoji--" I tried to turn and stop him but he already slid the door close. He was no longer in the room. My lips closed to a thin line as I began contemplating on what he just said.

' In this world.....there are two truths.....the one I choose will become the truth.....the one I didn't choose will become a lie.....'

Replaying that sentence in my head a couple of times, I thought of the main points of that sentence. Truth and Choice. There are two truths, and that creates way for decision or choice-making. To choose between two truths where one truth will become the real truth and the other truth turns to a lie? Is this all a matter of perspective then?

Some people will not accept a certain truth that others do. Some people will pretend it's a lie.

But....

To create a lie, there must be a truth to hide.

So if I go by that.....then, that means.....I have to discover the truth that's being hidden and expose the lie in disguise. But would it matter? After all, whichever ' truth' I choose will become the truth and the other ' truth' I didn't choose will be seen as nothing but a mere lie. There is no real guarantee that I made the right choice.....

So doesn't this render everything I've thought of until now, meaningless and pointless?

....

.....

No, that can't be it.

Ayanokoji-kun doesn't say useless things that don't have meaning in the future, so I should keep these thoughts at the back of my head for now. At this moment, I need to be very careful.

Putting that aside for now (once again), there is another important matter I must attend to quickly.

It's time for me to confront Chabashira-sensei.

Clearing my thoughts, I slid open the door and left the room, closing the door again. I proceeded to make my way to the faculty office.

I knocked on the door before slowly creaking it open and peeking my head to see who's in the room.

To my suprise, only Chabashira-sensei was present in the room. She seemed to be reviewing a few papers and seems to be comparing something to the notes written on her computer. It seems she either ignored my knocks or didn't hear it, so I politely knocked again and spoke,

" Chabashira-sensei?" I called.

" Hm?" She pauses her movement and looks to me with a bland look. " Oh, Horikita. Do you need something?" She sounded tired.

" Yes, actually. May I come in? I have something important I'd like to ask you." I put out my request.

" Mm." She hums, nodding. I took that as a ' yes' and entered the room closing the door behind me. After doing so, I immediately went straight to the point.

" Why didn't you inform us of the midterm topics changing?" I asked.

" Ah, that. It seems I've forgotten to inform you all.....my bad." She says in a dismissive tone. It irritated me but I must stay composed, I don't want to come off as the childish one in this conversation.

" Don't you think this is quite irresponsible of you, sensei? To forget about something like this.....it placed us in a major disadvantage." I crossed my arms, " We only have 2 weeks before midterms, but this sudden change is going to put us in a setback, especially when you ' forgot' to inform us." I said.

" Then shouldn't you inform your classmates about this, Horikita?" She shot back.

My eyes widened a little bit. How did she know that I've yet to reveal this information to my entire class?

" I am your teacher. And between me and the students, I possess knowledge that none of you are aware of." She stares at me dead in

the eye. " I may seem like I don't give a damn, but I do. I kept track of all the students habits when they are in class, because as a teacher, it's important for me to know how they would act. And as for you, you're quite secretive towards other people when under great risk and stress. A bad habit, but with good intentions I suppose." She elaborates.

It seems Chabashira-sensei wasn't lazing around either.....in which case, this confirms something else. Sensei lied about forgetting to inform us of the change, rather she intentionally hid it.....but if that's the case, then what's her deal? Why would she do that? Is she also cruel?

" If you're able to recall our bad habits that you speak of....then I fail to see how you were able to forget informing us of the change. That leads me to think you were lying, sensei." I said.

" You caught me." She chuckles, but it was insincere, " I did lie."

But why would you?

" As for my reasons.....nothing in particular. I just wanted to see how determined you were to finding out the 'truth' of the situation." She says.

That sounds like another lie...

" Then, explain why you intentionally left us in the dark about

these changes. That's negligence on your part as a sensei, is it not?"

" It's because I was instructed to keep it in the dark until you'd arrive and finally question me, Horikita."

Huh?

" What? By who? Who instructed you--"

" Who else? I'm sure you can come up with a name already." She says in a bored tone.

".....The director...?" I mumbled. It would make sense for that wretched woman to pull this little trick on us....she's just that type of person.

" I see....well you're correct." Sensei says.

Am I?

Her voice sounded almost unimpressed....as if she were expecting

something else. Is she still lying to me?

" Indeed, the director herself is the obvious choice. After all, she's wicked without measure.....only seeking things for her own self-pleasure...." She mutters before turning around. " Fooling everyone and dragging them into a world of hell.....even now, she'd want to continue your suffering one way or another." She says.

Sensei is speaking truthfully, her tone confirms that. However, I picked up a few unusual things with her wording. ' Obvious choice', ' she'd want', these two felt off to me. If I think deeper into this, the entire meaning of her sentence leads to a new path, a path in which the implication is much different than I expected. In other words, I might be wrong to accuse the director in this situation....

.But who else could be responsible for this? It couldn't be Ichinose-san, right? I don't know how smart she is.....but that look she gave me during the second game, and how she led her class to a landslide victory. Even though one could say she cheated with the director's help, she still paid the points necessary. That's right, once the shock is gone, it's easy to see how Ichinose won with everything in her favor. In that game, she taught us cruelty among students and the unfair truth of this situation, anything goes, as long as you're able to pay for it and as long as it's within Lumine's rules.

But if Ichinose-san were to have been the one responsible with changing the midterm materials.....it wouldn't make sense. Assuming she spent an expensive amount of points to rig the second game, the monthly points has yet to be delivered to its students. So it's not possible for her to already have gathered the points necessary to bribe the teachers. Besides that, why would she inform the other classes about it? Ryuen's class has the same materials as

her class, and it's likely Sakayanagi's class is also the same. Instead of focusing on Class D alone, shouldn't she make all the other classes suffer?

All the other classes except for hers, will amount to a 0 or a lower average score and thus no class points will be rewarded. Only the class with the highest average will receive the 300 class points. So if Ichinose was behind this.....then it's not like her to miss a chance in lowering all the classes potential scores.

Ryuen-kun? No, he wouldn't so something like this either.

Sakayanagi-san is also unlikely....

....

" Well, Horikita. You've entertained me long enough, so do you want me to share the new materials the rest of the classes have--"

" Wait." I felt my eyes widen.

" Hm?" She pauses, mid-sentence. She was holding a stack of papers....most likely the new review materials we ' should've' gotten earlier....

But...

" The person who changed the materials.....the person behind it.....it's not the director, is it?" I spoke slowly.

"..." Sensei was silent, but she eyed me carefully as if awaiting for my next words.

There's only one person left....

The one person who I think would try to pull something like this....

If I'm right, then....

" The one behind this.....was it my classmate, **Ayanokoji**? " I asked.

If it really is him....if sensei confirms it then this will add more questions than answers but at the very least, I can finally narrow it down straight to him.

".....Heh." Sensei chuckles.

" And if I say yes? What're your thoughts that led to the perpetrator being your classmate, if I may ask?" She says.

My thoughts?

....

' In this world, there are always two truths. The one you choose will become the truth, the one not chosen will become the lie. '

All along, it was a hint, wasn't it?

You never say useless things, Ayanokoji-kun....

" Ayanokoji-kun told me something before coming here to see you." I said.

" And that is?" Sensei asks.

" He told me, that there are two truths in this world. The truth I choose will determine the two truths fate; *One to become real truth, the other to become a lie.* He told me to choose wisely." I recited.

" But then came the question; *Why is the emphasis on choice?* People can firmly believe in one truth and one lie during the same moment. They wouldn't believe in the existence of two truths during that moment. Thus, the matter of choice wouldn't make sense in the usual context but..." I looked down towards the papers Sensei was holding.

" I think I get it now. The answer is right in front of me." I said before looking back into Chabashira-sensei's stare, " Two truths are presented to me at this very moment. The first truth, being the first review materials you informed us of 2 months ago. The second truth, being the papers you're holding right now and what the other classes are currently reviewing. Whichever truth I choose, then it will become the truth....." I said.

" Then.....which truth will you choose, Horikita?" She asks me.

" The truth I'm going to choose....." I took a deep breath, closing my eyes as I began to finalize my decision.

I opened my eyes.

"I'm going to choose the first truth. Because at the time, it had no reason to be hidden unlike the decoy that is the second truth that just came out of nowhere and at such an unprecedented time. That's my choice." I said.

....

.....

.....

Chabashira-sensei suddenly snorts before laughing to herself, leaning her head back as she placed a hand on her chest.

" Hahahaha! I can't believe it...." She says.

" He predicted what you'd say.....word for word..." She sighs.

" W-What?" I stuttered in shock. He predicted my answer? Word for word? that's just unbelievable.

" ' Horikita will come see you in this office, 2 weeks before midterms. And when she does, she'll choose the first truth because there'd be no reason for a second truth to appear, if not to act as a decoy to hide the first truth. That will be her choice.' he said to me. And here we are, Horikita. " She chuckles again, " Seriously, that boy.....he's the most peculiar one yet." She says.

Wait...then....this means--

" You are correct. Ayanokoji is behind all of this. He was the one who once again, fooled the other classes with a lie disguised as a truth." She announces to me, firmly and clearly.

" He.....did it again.....but why...?" I mumbled to myself in question.

Ayanokoji-kun, why would you put us at such a disadvantage? Or what felt like a disadvantage prior to this reveal.....if things didn't go as

you expected then we really would have....

" A boy shrouded in mystery, he is. He makes decisions that wouldn't make sense until you see the results but.....he is absolute in both his actions and decision-making. He is that confident in himself." Sensei says.

That's what makes him a big uncertainty.....I can't predict what he'll do next, no matter how hard I try.

But he's the only way to making sure we get through these 3 years.

To place my trust onto an unknown entity that can shatter it without a care once his goals are met...

It frightens me.

(2 weeks later....)

" We're....first place..." Hondo mutters. (I accidentally placed Ike here. Writing at 12 am is not a good idea.....)

" 300 class points.....w-we got the 300 class points!" Karuizawa says.

" All our studying....it didn't go to waste..." I hear Yukimura say in a tone of relief.

All the students were gathering at the board, staring at the announcement with looks of disbelief. They managed to achieve 300 class points after putting all their effort into studying the past two months. They deserve to enjoy this moment.

Meanwhile, I slowly turned my gaze to Ayanokoji-kun.

He turns his gaze to me as well.

He smiles softly,

" This is only the beginning, Horikita...."

Chabashira PoV

I wonder, Ayanokoji...

Did you ever tell Horikita about the way you changed the materials?

Does she know?

Do you want her to know?

What you had to do.....what threats you had to make, in order for things to go your way.

You're like a predator cornering whoever he deems prey...

I can still recall how you forced us to create the decoy that is the second truth....

The very day you returned to this school and entered the faculty office...

CHAPTER END!

Explanation will be in next chapter!

Also the announcement of the third game will be in the next chapter....finally.....quite poggers.

Can you guess what the third game will be? I will say that it'll take place in the island we all know and love.

so this chapter marks the end of the survey program/ midterms arc. Next chapter will act more as an.....after-effect or something, idk what u call it...

Maybe like....a prologue before Island exam arc if that makes any sense? Yeah.

Anyways, sorry for the long wait! Pls keep looking forward cuz i planned a ton of shit for the thirdgame while I was procrastinating.

Sorry if this feels rushed too....not my proudest chapter, but I feel as tho I did okay but that's ultimately left for you guys to judge. (pls be gentle onii-chan)

One last note: I am now @AnkitFTW' s slave :)))

Anyways,

KawaiiLumine, out~

S2. Episode 9: Does the Devil exist?

Chabashira PoV

I'd like to ask two questions.

Question number 1: Does the Devil exist?

Before answering that question, let's have a short review on what IS exactly the ' Devil'. At least, to what most people would associate that word to.

According to most beliefs, especially those in Judeo-christian religious beliefs, they'd state that the devil is the personification of all that is evil. The darkness that swallows everything it can take in. The devil is believed to be an entity that deceives human beings to turn against God and righteousness. To partake in evil acts that turns your entire soul pitch black.

To ultimately, have you tumble and fall from grace, and become irredeemable and impossible to save even by God himself.

Now, I hope that brief review has helped refreshed your mind a little on what the ' Devil' is believed to be.

With that, let's go back to my question; Does the Devil exist?

You can take all the time you need to gather your thoughts, and form your sure-fire answer.

But...in my opinion.

The devil does not exist.

A being who commands Hell, a being who holds the power to corrupt minds with a slip of its tongue, a being who has the power to destroy the world and succumb this land into its fiery inferno...

I do not believe such a being exists.

However,

There are some who states that the Devil can be anything you think it to be. That you shouldn't chain yourself to the beliefs of the majority, to the word of the Bible and religion. To summarize, a small percentage of people would state that the concept of the devil does exist, rather than a direct entity of all that is evil.

So that brings up my second question.

Question number 2: Could the devil exist?

Could the concept of the devil truly manifest into a human entity among us?

Could the devil take form in a human being and poison others with its maliciousness?

Could someone, a human being born of flesh and blood, truly become the devil stated in the religious texts? The devil incarnate, so to speak.

Of course, throughout human history, there is a record of certain human beings that caused massacres and unexplainable murders that people will often associate to being the true act of the devil.

Adolf Hitler.

Joseph Stalin.

These two men are often in debate for the worst human being in human history, and are placed in the topic of being the closest to the devil incarnate.

But even so, these two people held personal beliefs. They believed that they were in the right, and they should be given the power to command their beliefs to be realized upon the world. That all their killing was for the greater good. That the purging was justified.

And thus, these 'human' trait breaks away from the concept of the devil. Which is to become an entity that swallows everything it can take into its darkness. A being of pure evil.

So, could there ever come a time in when a human being is born into this world, who craves nothing but chaos? A human being that is deemed worthy of the title of 'Devil' ?

I walked down the hallway, the clanking of my heels interrupting the once tranquil silence.

Could the devil really exist?

Could there be a human that can never be understood by other humans? A human truly capable with the title of ' Devil' ?

A figure leaned at the corner of the wall, that area was devoid of students and school staff. That figure was humming to himself, awaiting my presence. I soon arrived and the humming comes to a halt as his golden brown eyes look to me, his iris seemingly glowing as the light reflected it within the dark.

A human...who will corrupt other humans into doing misdeeds?

He gives me a chilling smile.

Could it be the boy staring right at me?

Could he be the devil?

" Thank you once again for your assistance, Chabashira-sensei. The plan was a complete success and happened just like I thought it would. Without your help, the chances may have lowered, so I am grateful for your kind cooperation into improving our class rank." He said to me.

" I plan to develop my classmates into becoming strong for the future. Since cooperation is the number 1 key to victory when it comes to these games that decides whether we live or die. I have to do whatever it takes to slow down my adversaries and give way to my allies." He chuckles. " Actively taking the lead was never really my agenda but... someone competent enough has to do it."

" ... "

" Anyways, see you tomorrow, sensei." He waves goodbye and heads off. I look to his back as it moved farther and farther away.

I then recall back to that certain day he came to my office and informed me of his plan....

(Flashback to that day...)

" Ayanokoji....are you aware of what you're planning to do?" I ask him once.

He smiles, nodding.

I subconsciously gripped my folder a little tight as I glared at him.

" I'm sure you already know that the teachers here are--"

" Suffering just as much as the students?" He interrupts. He then continues to speak without the slightest care. " If that is the case, then you could say that what I'm about to do, is nothing short but a proper distribution. In this hellish environment, everyone is equal due to the suffering and horrors set by the director." He walks closer to me. I instinctively took a step back.

" If everyone here is equal as you say....." He leans closer to my ear and whispers his next words.

" Then everyone in this environment is free for me to use and discard."

He dropped the act for a moment there, his light tone replaced with a chilling one. He was serious about this. This is his true nature, a being that doesn't care for the well-being of others as long as it can serve his ultimate goal. He leans away while I stare at him in silent disbelief.

" And another thing, how did everything come to this? This school which was funded by the government. You'd think that the security of this school would be top-grade and yet, it was clearly overthrown by the current director, Lumine for reasons I'm yet to know. " his piercing gaze penetrated soul. It was as if he could read my mind.

" None of the staff likes Lumine one bit, so clearly nobody was on her side from the beginning. And yet, she still managed to topple the hierarchy of this school and turn it into the hell the students are familiar with today. With that, I'm led with the assumption that there was a person whom she used as her little pawn in all this...."

"..."

" You were that pawn, weren't you, Chabashira Sae?"

" Chabashira-sensei....what the hell did you do?!"

No....it's coming back to me.

" S-Sae-chan....you helped her...?"

Stop it. I'm already in enough pain-

" CHABASHIRA-SENSEI! SAVE US!"

" SENSEI! PLEASE!"

"S-Sensei....why are you just standing there..."

" Are you really going....to let us die...?"

Stop it....don't look at me with those eyes...

" Sensei..."

I began breathing heavily, but I didn't notice. The voices.....**their** voices were too loud...

" Your body language says it all. It confirms my assumption. there is no reason to doubt your biggest sin." I hear the boy say.

" Sensei..."

" Sensei....we hope that you burn in hell..."

" They must have cursed you with their last breaths. Perhaps wanting to condemn you to the deepest pits of hell for causing their deaths."

" One day sensei...your time will come too....you disgusting bitch!"

" I HOPE YOU DIE!"

" I HOPE YOU ROT!"

" I HOPE YOU BURN!"

I feel a hand smoothly placing itself on my shoulder. I looked up to face his nearing expression. What I saw wasn't just the eyes of Ayanokoji Kiyotaka.

No.

Behind him, stood the previous students of whom I let perish. Their eyes of hatred staring right at me, cursing me. Their faces were blurry, but their eyes were clear and told me everything I deserved. Their resentment, hatred, and despair all targeted towards me. And the one leading the charge was the boy staring in front of me. His golden eyes slowly turning dark as moments pass...

" You wish to redeem yourself. I'll give you that chance." he says to me. I didn't just hear his voice. I heard all of **their** voices cursing me. The person in front of me.....has become my deepest and gravest sins personified.

" Just do as I say, and soon the voices will stop."

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After emptying one of the lockers in the office, I quickly stepped in and luckily I was able to fit just fine. This locker was placed at the corner west side of the room. The chances of anyone looking towards this locker is pretty slim but not impossible. There were tiny holes for me to see what's happening from the outside, although barely. But I can clearly make out Ayanokoji standing in the middle of the room and humming to himself with a tune I wasn't familiar with.

The door knob begins to rattle, I slowed down my breath immediately so as not to make any audible breathing noises. I have to keep silent and keep calm. But I wasn't asked to do just that. I slowly slid my cellphone out of my pocket and opened the camera app. I made sure to mute my phone beforehand.

And then, I saw her walk inside the room. She had chest-length brown hair, purple eyes, and a slim but well-endowed figure. Her purple orbs immediately landed on Ayanokoji's figure, the latter's humming stops as he turns to look at Hoshinomiya. He straightens his back before introducing himself.

" My name is Ayanokoji. I've been waiting for you, Hoshinomiya-sensei." He says.

" Oh~?" Hoshinomiya's attention has been piqued, clearly. She steps towards him. I began silently recording this interaction, opening the locker just slightly, just enough for my camera to capture the scene.

" My my! I never would've expected a young handsome man like yourself to wait for me here!" She beams, already in front of him and observing his expression with a hum.

Ayanokoji smiles slightly. " I'm flattered, Sensei. Having a beautiful woman compliment my looks is quite a stroke for my ego. I should be careful." He shoots back smoothly.

" Oh~ And a charmer as well! Lucky me!" She says, clearly

getting turned on by this. This woman....just can't seem to rid of her bad habits.

" Oh wow...you have broad shoulders, Ayanokoji-kun..." She says in awe as she gets a feel on Ayanokoji's shoulders with her hands, slowly making its way down to his arms.

" Sensei, are you sure you should be touching me like this?" Ayanokoji asks. " It would be bad if someone were to walk in and misunderstand this." He says.

Hoshinomiya didn't seem to listen as she began getting a feel on Ayanokoji's chest. " Wow...your upper body feels...magnificent..." She says, her hands slowly making its way down *there*.

" *Sensei*." Ayanokoji grabs both of her wrists with his hands, putting her sexual touch to a halt. Still keeping that smile on his face, he begins addressing her. " Let's not go that far, shall we? A teacher and student being caught in a scandal like this.....both our lives would be jeopardized. So please don't try it." he tells her, sternly.

" I'm curious on how big is it though~" She teases.

" I don't feel the need to share that information with a woman unless she's engaged to become my wife. Which is, not happening anytime soon." he brushes away her flirtations before letting go of her hands and then taking a seat.

Hoshinomiya seems to be content with that for now, but still decides to take the seat right beside him. She's being pushy, it makes me wonder if Ayanokoji is annoyed by this, or he'd already expected this beforehand.

I'm willing to believe either.

" So, what business do you have with a young and beautiful teacher like me?" She says.

Why can't she act her age...

" I'd like for you to announce a new set of materials to your class and replace the ones given for the midterms."

Huh? He's going straight to the point.

" Pfft, what?" Hoshinomiya giggles. " What are you saying?" she begins laughing to herself while Ayanokoji looks to her with that same smile. The character he's putting on for show has yet to crack.

" Didn't think you were a joker, Ayanokoji-kun-"

" I'm not joking."

" So you're actually serious? Hahaha! Now that is funny!"

" But...." Hoshinomiya stops laughing and drops her smile. " I'm afraid I can't do that."

" Kind as I may seem, I am still a teacher here at this school and I have rules to follow. Even if you offer me private points, I doubt it will be enough to pay for a faculty member's special services." She says. She was no longer smiling but her tone of voice still remained the same. Just a bit more serious than before.

" My private points won't be enough to buy your services? Is there a set amount of private points that only you teachers know? Or perhaps.....you're intentionally trying to raise the price to a level in which I could not pay."

Hoshinomiya only smiles in challenge. Indeed there is a set amount of points that only teachers know when buying certain things, and that set amount will only change via director's orders. But in this situation, I'm willing to bet that Hoshinomiya is doing

the latter of what Ayanokoji had suggested, intentionally raising the amount to her favor up to the point where Ayanokoji could never hope to pay.

This is her way of protecting the status of her class.

Unfortunately...

" That's unfortunate. But are you really sure? Complying to me will benefit you a lot more than you think." Ayanokoji says.

" Kid, I'm not foolish enough to comply with just that. I'm quite the greedy teacher, but betraying my students to satisfy that greed? That's something I'd never do. " She says.

I felt a pain in my heart when she said the latter. To never betray your students in order to satisfy your greed....I.....that's something I wish to correct. If only I did that, then they'd still be here and I'd still be respected as a teacher-- no, I don't care about that. As long as they're alive and safe.

But it's too late for that now. The damage can't be undone.

" Is that so? How noble of you." Ayanokoji nods, " Even someone with a character like yours has a soft spot for the students under you. Perhaps that's the bare-minimum anyone would want from a teacher, so I applaud you for that." He says. I feel like that was meant to attack me personally.

" However, that's not a satisfying answer to hear from you, sensei. I didn't want to have to do this, but I have no other choice." He sighs.

" Hm?" Hoshinomiya remained unfazed but soon....

" Come out, Chabashira-sensei." He calls out to me.

" Huh? What're you--"

I opened the locker door and stepped out. Ayanokoji looks over to me and gives me a nod, while Hoshinomiya slowly turns her head to me. Her expression of shock slowly morphing into one of sheer disgust. This was an uncomfortable situation for me.

" What are you doing here." She glares at me, the always smiling cheerful sensei gone as the air turned cold between us.

" Hoshinomiya-sensei. I had Chabashira-sensei record something for me during our talk."

" Record...?"

Without another word, I began playing the video for the three of us to hear.

The video showed the scene of Hoshinomiya seemingly flirting with Ayanokoji and feeling him all over. The room was silent as Hoshinomiya's face turned blank at the video. It included her almost feeling his lower region after all. This was a serious matter and she of all people knows that. While Ayanokoji flirted back as well during the video, it doesn't erase the fact that Hoshinomiya started and escalated it further than he did. In any other school, once this video gets leaked and shown to the principal, Hoshinomiya would've been fired while Ayanokoji would potentially get suspended for a few weeks (but more likely to get away with nothing).

" Haha....hehe..." Hoshinomiya chuckles darkly before looking at me with a smile.

" So nothing about you has changed, hm?" She says to me. " You're still a little pawn to be toyed with. And this time, Ayanokoji-kun seems to be your player. How pathetic." She mocks me.

And then she sighs, shaking her head and shrugging. " Oh well,

but what's done is done. Can't change the past now, no matter how much you want to." She directed that to me.

" But, I think you shot a little too far high, Ayanokoji-kun." She says with a smile, turning to Ayanokoji. The latter raises a brow.

" Did you intend to threaten me by showing this to the director if I don't comply with your wishes?"

" Yes."

" Do you really think the director would care? Even a tiny bit?"

She grins. Ayanokoji stares at her in silence, not saying anything. I had a feeling this would be the case. Hoshinomiya knows how to turn the tables, given that she and I, along with the teacher of Class D (Arisu's class) , were alumnus of Advanced Nurturing High. And Hoshinomiya was just as cunning as she is now from back then.

Indeed, would the director even care? This plan would've worked if it were any other school. But in this type of school where the rules bend to the director's will.....it's hopeless, no? But this is unusual, I'm sure that Ayanokoji wouldn't have missed such a crucial detail in his planning. It's out of character for him to waste his mystery factor with such a mistake like this.

" Heh! So all this hype was for nothing!" She beams at him. " You've come far, and done wonderful. As a teacher, I respect all your efforts throughout the games so far. But this is quite a misplay for you, Ayanokoji-kun. " She says.

" Well then! This was quite the eventful afternoon. But it's getting late and I'm quite tired." Hoshinomiya says as she stretches her arms. " I'll be going now. I am pretty tired today."

" Bye bye~"

She heads to the door, humming to herself cheerfully. Ayanokoji was yet to say anything or maybe he really didn't have anything to say at all? I wonder what's going on inside his head. It's difficult to predict what he might do next in a seemingly hopeless situation-

" Do you play poker, Hoshinomiya-sensei?" He calls out to her without looking.

Hoshinomiya halts just as she was about to open the door. Why did he say that all of a sudden?

" What's with that question, Ayanokoji-kun? Now that you've got nothing to say as a comeback, you intend to make small talk? How bland." Hoshinomiya giggles, and yet she still stayed. Why is that?

If she didn't care, then any other person would've expected her to leave without a second thought.

" Nothing. Just thought I'd ask....because..."

" Your poker face is not too shabby, Hoshinomiya-sensei."

" Poker face?" I finally decided to speak. I needed to know where he was going with this and why Hoshinomiya still isn't leaving.

" Yeah." he nods. " From our interaction, I was observing her way of speech, expression, body language, and discerning her character from what she shown to me at least. Then I came to the conclusion that Hoshinomiya sensei might go well with poker, and then that conclusion turned to: *Hoshinomiya-sensei must like to play poker.*" he says.

" The way she came at me with words carried through subtle aggression in order to create an illusion in where this situation was hopeless to begin with. A nice bluff to use the director's interests to

your favor, and also the fact that we aren't in an ordinary school. And then masking it gently with oozing confidence to throw me off the track entirely and leave the conversation just like that." He explains in detail. How did he discern this much? And he worded it in a way that suggests that it's not an act of desperation but rather straight fact, especially when Hoshinomiya is still here to listen.

" Now you're just speaking out from your ass, Ayanokoji-kun. Don't you think you sound a little desperate?" Hoshinomiya says.

" But you sound a little defensive there, sensei." he responds in a heart beat. " Could it be that you do indeed play poker?"

" And if I do, what of it?"

" Then you must be drowning in debt."

" Huh?"

I stood there wide-eyed. This interaction was shifting to Ayanokoji's favor once more.

" Everything I mentioned so far, are simple tricks that any poker player should apply in a game. But these tricks began turning into your habits, which were clear for me to identify." he says, " That opens the theory of you entangling yourself in the art of gambling. Your character fits nicely into that category, the way you didn't hesitate to get a feel on me gave me the impression that you had a risky character."

He slowly walks towards her, not breaking off their eye-contact.

" And those who possess risky characters are very likely to partake in gambling for the thrill of it, or for the greed. And yours, I determine to be the former."

" As far as I know, from what Lumine said and from what Chabashira-sensei herself had confirmed.....it's that everyone here has chains they can't break free off. And all those chains trace back to Lumine one way or another." He stares her down like he did to me.

Hoshinomiya looked petrified as she dares to look into his uncomfortable gaze.

" In your case, endless amount of debt must be the root of your stay. Debt you cannot pay. Debt that will drown you if ever you escape from this place." He reaches for her hands and gently caresses her palms.

And then, with a soft tone, he spoke,

" It would be a shame if Lumine really chose to dispose of you once she sees this video..."

" You have a point saying that more likely than not, she wouldn't care one bit. However, you forget one crucial thing about the cruel director; that she's a sadist to her very core."

" D-Don't touch me!" She pulls her hand away from his grip and musters the strength to feign anger towards him, but even I can tell that behind that facade is nothing but genuine fear. Her thoughts must be messy and insecure now.

" Lumine has nothing to lose if she were to kick you out or even kill you, all for the laughs. Do you seriously think you mean anything to her? If I propose the idea to her in an entertaining manner, then she'll likely act on it. She can replace you with one of her own employees to take your spot as Teacher of Class A. If it means seeing you suffer, she'll gladly approve-"

" WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?!" Hoshinomiya roars out with every shred of emotion. " WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME? DID I DO ANYTHING WRONG TO YOU? WHY DO YOU HAVE TO MAKE ME SUFFER MORE THAN I ALREADY AM!" She cries out.

I was shell-shocked at the sight. Tears were pricking the corner of her eyes.

" Why....WHY THE HELL MUST YOU PLACE MY LIFE ON THE LINE!" She grabs him by his blazer's collar. " For the past few years...I spent coping.....because of these damn chains. " She grits

her teeth to seem more angry than sad, but her falling tears said otherwise.

" I can't help myself...I can't save my students. This is the only thing I can do for them. Just endure until I finally turn rotten." She looks down to the ground, but her grip still stayed strong on his collar.

" But these chains....it's not because of the director. It's because of your selfish homeroom advisor...." her voice breaks, " I may gamble my life away and all my money. I may surround myself with debt. I also carry my own sins."

" But Chabashira...that *bitch* gambled the lives of her students..."

....

" She helped that wicked woman achieve her goal and changed this environment to literal hell. Chabashira is a nasty human being. And then you come around to make things WORSE." She looks up to him with burning anger. " JUST LEAVE ME AND MY STUDENTS ALONE! Please....."

" I beg you....p-please...."

And the tears finally fall without reservation. She could no longer hold them back. I felt like crying too but I'm not given that privilege. She's right, I'm a nasty horrible woman. I don't deserve the right to cry when I let my greed consume me.

I can't blame this on the devil.

" I do not care." He says, with indifference in his tone and

expression. He grips the woman's shoulders and forces her teary eyes to look deep into his.

" If you truly wish to stay and protect your students. Then do as I say." He bluntly puts.

Hoshinomiya, through her sobbing, was once again filled with fear.

He smiles at her mess of a face.

" I do not care about your ambition or wishes. I will put you to use, no matter what. Even if it means holding everything you hold dear **hostage**." He says.

how....how could he say that...?

Everything he's doing...

Is the act of a devil.

" Announce a new set of study materials for your class. And convince the other teachers to do the same. That is all, Hoshinomiya."

And the boy wins.

Hoshinomiya Chie....has no choice but to comply in order to protect what dignity she has left by protecting her students.

Her students.....the one thing she refuses to gamble...

(Back to the present...)

That's what happened. The sheer horror I felt as I watched him break her down.

He used Hoshinomiya, because he knew that out of all of the classroom advisors, she'd had the most influence. She knew her way around lying to others. Eventually, Sakagami-sensei and Mashima-sensei fell for her lies and switched the materials as well and I eventually followed as to not be suspicious via Ayanokoji's wishes.

But after the deed had been done, he told me to delete the video in front of Hoshinomiya. At the time, I wondered why he would allow the video to be deleted? He's basically untying Hoshinomiya's leash and once again letting her run on her own terms. But now I understood, if Hoshinomiya sensei were to take back her word, then the trust between students and teacher will dampen and become weaker within her class. That'll prove a huge obstacle for her class to overcome and Hoshinomiya knows that, which is why she hadn't done anything against Ayanokoji's expectations....

This boy....

It really raises the question of whether or not he is the devil...

But even after what had transpired...

I don't think he's the devil.

Because even he has goals to carry. It's unclear what they may be, but he doesn't seek destruction. Why else would he untie Hoshinomiya's leash when the plan is secured?

Wouldn't the devil kept the video no matter what? To act as leverage?

He didn't do that, simply because his goal had been achieved for now.

He has goals....just like a human.

That's why, he's not the devil.

But if he were to truly erase the last human aspect he has left...

Then...

The devil could truly exist within that boy.

CHAPTER END....

Hi :)

Bye ;)

S2. Episode 10: The Third Game...

Ichinose PoV

" Honami! It's been quite a while since your last visit. How are things going--"

" Mistress, I want to know something. How did he do it?"

I stared into her golden-colored pair of eyes. She smiles and beckons me closer, to which I responded accordingly and walked closer to her. She presses a button the remote and a video starts playing, it showed an interaction between three unusual people;

Chabashira Sae, teacher of the recently promoted Class C.

My teacher, Hoshinomiya Chie.

And last but not least....

Ayanokoji...

But as I carefully observed the footage. Something was definitely off with Ayanokoji's expression, it was awfully fake, similar to mine. There was unfortunately no audio from the footage, so I was left to

guess what they were talking about, but any person can determine that Ayanokoji manipulated both teachers into doing his bidding just from the video alone.

" Something interesting must've happened back at London for him to change acts just like this." I hear Lumine say with amusement, " Haah~ Finally! The monster is coming out to play!"

"..."

" Honami~? You okay there? Or are you perhaps getting cold feet?"Lumine teases me, poking her head into my field of vision.

I simply smiled. She couldn't have been ever more wrong.

" No, mistress." I turn to her with my sincerest smile. " This is going to be exciting for you, especially. You plan to announce the third game later on, correct? I don't know what game it's going to be, but I can guarantee that it'll be an entertaining show. Especially when I plan to defeat him thoroughly." I said.

She laughs, patting my back. " Hahaha! I'll look forward to that then~!" She says that, acting like she really believes in me, but in reality she always thought otherwise.

Mistress sees this boy as something else. An unpredictable show. Deep down, she truly thinks that I stand no chance against him if he really does end up being serious in the war. And perhaps I share the same sentiment, but that's because beating him was never my goal to begin with.

My goal is to provide Mistress with a show she'll never forget...

Whether I win or lose, as long as this crazed sister figure before

me continues to laugh and smile. Then I don't care about anything else. If dying will make her laugh even more, then I will do just that. That's the least I could do for her after she gave me a new purpose to live.

" W-What are you saying....? Y-You...won't kill me...?" I asked her with a trembling voice.

She smiles, her golden eyes somehow illuminating this rainy dark atmosphere. She reaches her palm to graze my cheek gently, somehow it was warm. Almost comforting. Who is this woman?

" P-Please..." Tears began falling down my face once again, " Please...kill me....I don't deserve to live..."

" Is it because you no longer have a purpose?" She asks me.

Purpose...?

That's right, I no longer have a purpose. In a fit of rage, I destroyed my two purposes of living. A sin I could never wash away.

I nod slowly, confirming her words.

Suddenly, she takes off her jacket and wraps it around me. I looked up to her and I was met with a terrifying gaze that made me tremble from head to toe. She emanated warmth in her demeanor--but her eyes told the truth. She was far from kind. She's a woman who unlike me, revels in sin.

" How about I give you a new one?" Her face leans closer to mine. I got a close-up view of the psycho in her eyes.

I couldn't move. I couldn't breathe.

" Live for my entertainment and nothing else."

Live for her entertainment and nothing else....

" Would I be correct to assume that you're reminiscing that certain day, Honami? The day we met?" She asks me with that same old smile.

I nod. " Yes."

" What a coincidence, so am I!" She clasps her hands enthusiastically, " I'm glad I picked you up on that day, and introduced you to my vision of this world. Oh, and you grew up to be such a lovely girl! But I am quite bitter that you've grown taller and..."

Her eyes glance to my chest for a second.

" And also *bigger* in certain places." She says.

I giggle to that. " Mistress, your body is perfect the way it is." I assured her.

" I know!" She hums confidently, " I just wanted to point out that one day, it's possible you might be mistaken for a cow, Honami."

I pouted. " hey!" Hah, she always likes to tease me whenever she gets the chance. And I can't help but like the teasing somewhat.

It's not because I'm a masochist....it's just...

As long as she's laughing...and smiling.....even if it's at my own expense. Then that's all that matters. That is my purpose of living.

Horikita PoV

It's been a few days since the midterms had taken place. It's still a shock that our class came out on top--well, it was a shock for those who weren't aware of what was going on behind the scenes. As I thought that, I turned to glance at my seatmate. His eyes scrutinized everyone in the classroom, almost as if he was taking note of every little habit he could possibly pick up and use it for later.

But I wondered what was going through his head. Reading him almost felt pointless since there's nothing to pick up on. From my perspective, it's as if his head is empty until prompted, similar to that of a robot. But I wonder if that's really the case? What's his perspective like? Is his mind always thinking of strategies and important planning? Is he perhaps daydreaming? Or maybe, the assumption that he really does act like a robot to his environment.

My thoughts freeze as soon as his gaze landed on me. Our eyes made contact, and he was no longer looking at anything else.

I averted my eyes and pretended to mind my own business.

" Are you all right, Horikita ?" He inquires, " I was wondering where that gaze was coming from, Though, for it to end up being your gaze in particular...." His tone was laced with slight amusement. " I can't help but worry for the girl who dislikes my existence beyond reason."

" Perhaps it's because your existence is something I am unable to understand! "

Is what I wanted to say but couldn't. I don't know why I couldn't. The only response I could think of was a quick excuse,

" You must've mistaken it for someone else." I began my lie, turning a page of my book. " It is true that my gaze landed in your direction but it was only for a split second. A quick survey on our classmates, you can say."

He hums, clearly not buying my excuse, but played along. " I see. I, too, was doing the same thing."

" What a horrible coincidence, no?" I reply.

" Not exactly. It's good that we thought of doing the same thing, it means we're on the same page and that our chemistry is becoming quite sharp." He says.

Chemistry?

" Ayanokoji-kun..." I closed my book, looking to him.

He looks back. Awaiting my next words.

" Wha-" But before I could finish my question, the door opened and Chabashira-sensei made her stride inside the class. I closed my mouth and reluctantly turned to her.

Her eyes glance to me for a second, and then to the person next to me, Ayanokoji.

What exactly did Ayanokoji do to make Sensei comply to his

wishes? Or was it really just sensei doing the dirty work? The possibility of other teachers being involved is quite high since changing the material for all of the classes is....not something that a one teacher can do alone.

If another teacher really was involved, then why did they do it? I can't figure out any possible benefit unless Ayanokoji and Sensei offered something enticing. But that will also be a question in itself; *What could they possibly offer to the teachers?*

My thoughts were cut-off when Chabashira-sensei arrived to the podium. She looked as if there was important news to tell. Everyone would expect the announcement of the third game, since the few months were up.

" You all look ready today." She starts, eyeing each and every one of us, " I'm guessing all of you already have an idea of what I'm planning to announce. And yes, it is indeed the announcement for the **Third Game**. "

I can feel almost everyone tensing up at that. The feeling of dread was running rampant in the classroom, but we continued to stay silent and listen well to what Sensei has to say.

" The Third Game is called the " **Egg Hunt**". "

Egg hunt?

" As the name suggests, in this game, all the classes will compete in what most will refer to as an Egg Hunt competition. Of course, there are rules as to how exactly the game would work since it's not going to be your typical hunt." She walks off the podium and goes to the students in the front row.

She gives them a stack of paper, " Pass this along." She instructed and the students complied immediately.

I received my paper and began reading the rules...

' The Third Game: Egg Hunt!

Welcome to the Egg Hunt! Please carefully read the following rules below;

- 1. You can't buy anything with points during the game.**
- 2. Your phones will have to be handed over to the school during the game.**
- 3. Students aren't allowed to skip the game unless they have a personal protection point. (Or a class protection point to have the entire class skip the game)**
- 4. Rule violation will not be taken lightly. If a student is caught breaking the previous rules, then they will have to endure harsh punishment (courtesy of the Director)**

Explanation:

All the classes will be provided with easter eggs equivalent to the amount of their students.

However, in each class, there will be one student that will be provided with a master egg. The master egg is the most important egg within this game.

Students will be given 2 hours to start hiding their eggs from the other classes. Once the time is up, the game will have officially begun.

The goal of each class is to find and collect the other classes' master eggs. If a class manages to collect all the master eggs then the game will officially end as soon as they confer with Director Lumine!

However, the game will end either way once one week has passed. Whichever class holds the higher amount of master eggs will win the game (Example: The game ends with Class A

holding 2 master eggs while the other classes failed to get a higher amount or had none at all)

Now, you must be wondering. Where are the rewards of this game? Well, the rewards actually lies within the eggs.

If a student finds and collects a normal easter egg then they will be awarded with private points.

< 1 normal egg = 1,000 private points >

So if you want to gather private points, then take the chance and scour the environment for those normal eggs! The amount you'll end up with is all up to you!

Now, for the master eggs. These are the most important eggs of the game because unlike the normal eggs where it provides private points.

The master eggs actually provides Class Points.

< 1 Master Egg = 400 class points >

If you collect all 4 master eggs then the class winner will receive the total amount of 1,600 Class Points! This is the perfect chance for the lower classes to gain a chance in closing the distance in class points between them and Class A!

(Note: Additional rules may be added later when the game is set to begin. So keep on your toes and be on the lookout!)

enjoy the game! '

" Seriously...?"

" An easter egg hunt?"

" We can just hide it anywhere within the school right? Ugh, this sounds super annoying....there'll be so many students on the

lookout..."

Our classmates voiced their confusion and minor complaints in regard to this game. But this was great opportunity to overtake Class B and be one step closer to beating Class A, so whatever complaints they may have must be set aside completely.

This school is a big environment, the advantage will go to those who've explored the school to its very depths. Personally, I never took the time to do that, and I doubt most of our classmates had taken the time to do that as well.

But...

I glance to Ayanokoji, he was still reading the paper whilst humming to himself.

Perhaps he might know what to do...

" Well, I have no idea what to do." Ayanokoji mutters, stretching his arms. " My school exploration is quite low. The odds are going to be against us."

What?

He turns to me, sighing. " Seriously Horikita? Did you really think I knew the ins and outs of this school? Please, don't overestimate me. For most of the first month, I spent my time in my room due to my lack of friendships. I'm sure you're well-aware of that."

....Crap.

I've forgotten. The Ayanokoji from before was a loner in every aspect. He wasn't as emotive as he is now, and he practically fumbled in forming relationships with those in our class. The only ones left to rely on are the popular students that is Hirata and Kikyo, but I have a feeling their knowledge is limited just as much as ours.

...

" We're doomed." I murmured to myself.

" Oh! Maybe if one of us has the master egg, we can hide it in our rooms? " Mori Nene suggests, " Nobody can access it unless you have the key."

" But wouldn't the other classes think of the same thing?" Karuizawa interjects.

" That is true....ugh, if all the classes do that then what's the point?!" Shinohara yells.

" Actually, that might not be the case." Yukimura speaks up. Everyone turns to him.

" Class A will probably go with that strategy. But I don't think the other classes will. Classes B, C, and D are too far behind in class points compared to Class A, who will do whatever it takes to protect their overwhelming lead. I think B, C, and D will risk their master eggs outside of their rooms in favor of having the chance to hunt master eggs and gaining class points. " he says.

" You have a point there, Yukimura-kun." Hirata nods, " In fact, I was also thinking of the same thing. I also doubt that none of the lower classes would waste the chance to gain a huge amount of class points. " he says, while rubbing his now fully healed hand.

They did have a point. Soon, our classmates began brainstorming with them in regards to where we'll hide the master egg in this school....

" What are you all doing?" Chabashira-sensei's voice interrupts the atmosphere.

" Um, we're just planning ahead on where to hide the master egg in this school." Matsushita answers.

" I see. " The mature woman crosses her arms, sighing. " Unfortunately, doing that will lead to nothing. Because this game....*isn't going to be taking place in the school.*"

A momentary silence....

" What?!" The entire class erupted in shock once more.

They looked at each other and then to sensei.

I stood up immediately, gaining the sudden attention of my classmates.

" Are you serious sensei? Then where will the game take place?" I asked, quickly. If not at school, then where else?

" The game will be taken place in...."

Third Person PoV

Ayanokoji stood at the cruise ship's deck. The view of the ocean,

along with a soothing breeze that gently made contact with his bangs. It was calming. The boy stood there in silence, wearing a contradicting expression. He wore a calm smile, but empty eyes. His body was lax, but his mind was on-guard.

He closes his eyes, trying to erase all thoughts and sink into the calm silence. Something he hasn't felt in a while now.

But his eyes open once again.

He releases a disappointed sigh, before turning his back on the beautiful crystal ocean.

He walks away, silently.

Who knows what's going through his head at this very moment. Does he have a plan in mind for how they're gonna about this game?

Or maybe he'll figure something out once they arrive to their destination;

The Island.

CHAPTER END!

Rushed the chapter since there's not rlly much content left to put in this. Everything else is set up for the next Season!

I hope the Egg Hunt game sounded interesting enough. This game was actually from a draft I wrote WAYYY back then, and I decided to recycle it for this fic and made a few changes to fit.

S3 will take a while to publish since I wanna try planning everything out in detail instead of winging it like usual this time. And see if that works for me better.

Though, S3. Episode 0 will prolly come out tomorrow.

Will it continue the WR backstory? Or perhap something else. Still yet to decide on my end! :D

Anyways, i'm rlly excited to write the next season once everything is a bit more organized.

LumineIsSortaActive, out!

S3. Episode 0: Family.

Yagami PoV

" Kiyotaka! Over here!" Subject 10--no, that's no longer her real name. It's Amasawa Ichika now.

Ichika meaning "best", or "excellent".

Amasawa meaning Heaven or the imperial sky.

She really chose the names that could boost her ego as much as possible. As expected of her, I suppose.

" Kiyotakaaa! Hurry up already!" She yells. Kiyotaka heads to our table with his lunch tray in hand. It was the same as ours, healthy, nutritional, but bland.

He takes a seat.

" What took you so long" Ichika asks.

" Sorry. The instructors extended my drills just a tiny bit. " Kiyotaka replies in his usual monotone voice.

" They really aren't holding back on you, huh..." I said before feeding myself a spoon of this bland grub before me.

" It's to be expected. After all, " He looks to me, " I did help you."

As soon as he said that, I begin to see flashbacks of that very day,

The day an unexpected friendship between him and I--and now, Ichika as well, had bloomed. Never would have any of the students thought that *the* Ayanokoji Kiyotaka would extend his helping hand. We all distanced ourselves from him at first, thinking that he was just a cold-natured person who exists in a different plane than us. He gave the impression of a robot who does what its programmed to do without fail, and that nothing else matters--even us.

But...

It wasn't the case.

Kiyotaka is human just like us.

However for him to place the blame on me like that...

I smirked. " I don't recall asking for your help. I am grateful, but you helped me out of your own volition...therefore, " I point the spork at him, " That's all on you, Kiyotaka."

He frowns.

Ichika bangs her cup on the table like some sort of gavel, " The defendant has presented enough evidence for the jury, which is also yours truly Amasawa Ichika, to deem the plaintiff, Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, absolutely guilty! " She tries to speak in a deeper tone, but we were still children. Thus, she didn't really change her tone much at all.

She bangs the acting ' gavel' again. " I hereby sentence thee to becoming my slave for the week!"

" This court is severely biased." Kiyotaka mutters.

"...."

" Pft-!"

All three of us began laughing to ourselves. It was strange for the three of us to laugh so openly in a suffocating environment such as this. But as soon as our bond formed, things became a bit more fun. As if there was a splash of color in this blank, white room. I smiled more, I laughed more, and I felt.....awfully content.

Even the usually stoic boy, Kiyotaka, was laughing along with us. Breaking his stone-cold expression in certain moments like these. I wonder if the time spent together was starting to melt his heart little by little....because that's what's happening to me, and I can safely assume the same is for Ichika.

We soon stopped laughing, and began eating in a comfortable silence. I'm sure the other students were still shocked at our interactions, but what will they do about it? Nothing. And it doesn't seem like the instructors care either, so that's a huge plus.

Moments like these....

I wish it could last forever.

Because right here and now, it feels as though we're just normal children eating and having fun. Temporary it may be, but for the three of us who had never possessed the luxury to live such a life.....it's just enough.

(Few weeks later...)

" Takuya, Kiyotaka. I've been thinking about something for quite a while now, ever since the three of us became friends." Ichika speaks up, her face beaming with excitement.

" Hm?" The both of us turn to her, curious for what she has in mind.

" Why don't we become family?" She suggests.

A.....*family?*

How did such a thing ever enter her mind. The concept of family is....non-existent to people like us. I couldn't utter any remark, nor did I hear Kiyotaka respond at all. It seems she had us both stumped. What an achievement, it's something only Amasawa Ichika could accomplish so easily.

" Think about it!" She spreads her arms wide, " Neither of us know the true concept of family. Even though Kiyotaka has his father running this white room facility, it's clear that there's some resentment of sorts between them." She begins by pointing out the obviously broken father and son relationship.

And then she points to me. " Takuya, I don't think I need to go into detail as to why this would be beneficial for you, and neither should I since we both float in the same boat." She grins.

" But still.....family?" I begin voicing out my feelings on the matter. " That's something neither of us have experienced. It's unknown territory for people like us." I sigh, " Even our own

friendship is still something we've yet to completely get a grasp on."

" But-"

" Not to mention, we didn't even have proper names until some time ago." I finish.

"Are you done?" She asks me.

"....Yes?" I answered, confused. Did she expect more reasons as to why I'm reluctant about this--

" So, is it a yes or a no?" She immediately asks.

" W-what?"

" Yes or no?" She repeats.

Is she actually serious about this? We're three child experiments who have never seen the light of day outside of the white world we were born and raised in. We were forced to hide away the inner turmoil in favor of surviving in this demon curriculum.

I enjoy the good moments shared between the three of us.

I often wish for those moments to last a little longer.

But rushing things is not--

" Sure, why not?" I hear Kiyotaka say.

" What???" I turn to him now, absolutely bewildered by how

quickly he accepted this idea. He turns to me and shrugs, " There isn't any harm in testing this idea, no?"

" Well, no but--"

" Then that settles it." He interrupts me and turns to Ichika. " We'll go along with it, Ichika."

The scarlet-haired girl squeals in delight. But the both of them are trying to push through with this nonsense without my consent--

" So that makes Takuya my brother, and Ichika my sister, huh. " He says.

" Yep! And you'll play the role of older brother since you ARE a year older, Kiyotaka." Ichika says, nodding.

" Fair enough." He shrugs.

" H-Hey, I didn't consent to this--"

Bam! I suddenly felt a fist making contact with the back of my head. I muttered a curse as I gripped the back of my head in pain from the sudden contact.

" Shut up, middle child!" I hear Ichika scoff, " Nobody will listen to your pleas!"

" Ichika...." I glare daggers at her. " I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!"

" Oh no~!" She screams with sarcasm before running and hiding behind Kiyotaka. " Kiyotaka! Help! Takuya wants to hurt sweet innocent lil' me!" She feigns helplessness.

She's awfully good at playing the role of being the little brat in this ' family' idea of hers....

" Sorry, but I don't intend to protect those who deserve their punishment." Kiyotaka says.

" Huh? What--AH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!"

ichika struggles as Kiyotaka takes hold of her and places her in front of him.

" LET GOOOO!!!" She begins seriously screaming.

" Go ahead, Takuya. " Kiyotaka gives me the green signal.

I began cracking my fists.

" W-Wait, Takuya! H-Hold on!" Ichika puts on a nervous smile, " I-I was just joking! I won't do it again, I promise! J-Just let this slide, will ya???"

I began approaching her. Her eyes widen and her panic increases exponentially.

" TAKUYA PLEASE!"

" N-NO! KIYOTAKA PLEASE LET ME GO! DON'T LET HIM HURT ME!"

" NOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!"

It wasn't before long that the three of them got used to this....family dynamic.

" I read in books that when forming a familial relationship with non-blood related people. It's recommended that we use an object to act as some sort of promise between the three of us." Ichika says.

" What?" I was confused. Where in the hell is she finding these so called books that suggest this stupid thing.

" A string will do! We can tie one string around all of our pinkies and then make a promise--"

" I don't think that matters." Kiyotaka interrupts.

We both turn to him.

" It's a hassle." he sighs, " We don't need an object to act as the construct for this ' family' of ours. I may not know much about family myself....but.." He looks to me and then to Ichika.

" If I see Takuya as my brother. Then I'll call him my brother. If I see Ichika as my sister, then she is my sister.....won't that enough for us?"

"...."

I remember being against this idea. I was reluctant, but was quickly forced to go along with it, and it wasn't until now that I

begin to realize....that maybe....being called their ' brother' isn't so bad of an idea, after all.

Maybe calling them my ' family'.....won't be so unnatural.

I begin chuckling to myself and shaking my head. " God, this is stupid and pathetic for kids like us....acting as family with you all, despite neither of us understanding its concept.....seriously, what a joke."

" But...." I smiled, nonetheless. " If it's with you two, then I don't mind going along with the idea."

" Takuya, you never had a choice in the first place. You're the middle child. Whether you like it or not, you were gonna be forced into it." Ichika deadpans.

I felt an irk mark form on the side of my head. This girl-

" Well then!" She reverts back to her happy attitude, taking hold of my hand and Kiyotaka's. She smiles. " It's settled. We're officially siblings!"

I glance to Kiyotaka and noticed a small smile forming on his face again. That made me smile too. What a contagious disease.

" This is going to be a rather troublesome family, don't you think?" I muttered to the both of them.

" That's what's gonna make it special, Takuya." Ichika giggles.

I facepalmed at that, sliding my palm down my face, I look to Kiyotaka and wondered about his opinion about how this'll turn

out.

" And you? Do you have any thoughts about this arrangement?" I ask him, even though he was the first to agree with Ichika's idea. I wanted to know if we were all on the same page for reals.

" About being a family?" He asks. I nodded.

But then, I froze for a second.

I noticed a glimmer in his usually dark and dead eyes. That tiny bit of light that didn't exist there before.....existed now.

" It'll be an interesting development, I suppose." He answers plainly, but his eyes gave away his real answer.

" I'm happy that you two are willing to be my family."

That's what his eyes spoke, that his mouth didn't.

Ichika saw it too. We both knew....

Yeah, this won't be such a bad idea after all.

CHAPTER END!

Annnd that's it for Episode 0!

I love writing the way these three interact. It's wholesome. Which is rare in this fic.

How ironic that this had taken place in the White Room of all places though....

But don't forget that Kiyotaka in this fic considers himself to be a monster.

That reason will prolly be revealed in the next Episode 0!

But anyways....time to plan out for how Season 3 will go.

WholesomeMomentsLumine, out~

S3. Episode 1: The line between Ally and Foe

Suzune PoV

" There you are, Suzune-chan. I've been searching for you everywhere!" I hear Kikyo's voice as her footsteps began nearing.

Eventually, she arrived next to me and began leaning eagerly against the rails. Releasing a joyous sigh as her eyes glistened more than usual while watching the ocean view. I had to admit it myself, that the ocean was a nice change of pace.

Being in that school....it was suffocating.

Of course, we're yet to escape this hell. This is still within that damned director's rule. But deep down...

I don't intend to escape this hell.

Not until I find Nagumo Miyabi and kill him. Not until I achieve revenge for my older brother.

But I can't ever reveal my ulterior motives to the class. It'll be detrimental to our morale, and we've already lost too much of it. I can't escalate it any further and I must do my best to ensure their freedom.....because that's the role I was given as ' leader'.

Leader.....I can't imagine myself in that role. With *him* around.....I'm nothing more than a shadow, or perhaps the term ' puppet' is more suitable.

" Hey, what are you thinking inside that of yours, Suzune-chan?" Kikyo interrupts my inner monologue. Her head peeked unto the utmost side of my vision, begging for my attention.

I heaved a sigh, leaning my cheek on my palm.

" Nothing."

" That's a lie. Please tell me the truth?" She quickly calls out.

I smiled softly. There was one good thing that came out of this living nightmare, and that is my mended relationship with Kikyo. It's the only good thing going for me and I pray it stays that way.

" Fine," I surrender. " It's just....." My other hand tapped on the railing.

" Are you having doubts about Ayanokoji-kun again?" She questions. As expected, she knew what I was thinking of from the start.

" I've been trying not to." I started, " But every time he does something unexpected.....it always raises so many questions that I constantly try to bury, cause I know he wouldn't give me a straight answer to any of them."

I often wonder how he convinces people like sensei into doing his bidding. It's clear that sensei was part of his plan in saving our class during the midterms. But how would he have done it? As far as I know, teachers have been neutral and standing by the sidelines during class matters. The midterms shouldn't have been any different but...

" It's pointless to worry about these types of things, though." Kikyo says.

" I know that. But Kikyo, don't you have any suspicions--"

" Of course I do. Ever since he came back from that survey exam, I've had almost the same questions as you. But..." She drops her smile, " It's clear he wouldn't tell a soul. We may never know the truth behind his actions.....maybe it's better that way. Or maybe it's not."

She sighs, looking up to the blue horizon. " He scares me, to be honest. I've been uneasy around him ever since his return....I think I prefer the Ayanokoji-kun we got to know earlier in the school year. " She says.

She's scared of him...

" I'm also scared of him." I admit, " I try not to be in order to keep up the pretense that Ayanokoji-kun and I are working in a close relationship for the class's sake. But that's not the case, never has been, never will be. " I turned and leaned my back on the rail.

" I think I also prefer the old Ayanokoji-kun. He felt much more predictable than he is now." I said with a chuckle.

" I don't agree with that." Kikyo says.

" Hm?"

Her somber eyes turned to me, as if she knew a deeper story to him.

Does she know something about him? Something I don't?

" Back then, he really was different. As far as I can recall, he only wished to make friends. He never verbally said it, but I can tell that's what he wanted, because deep in his eyes....was loneliness. " She says, her voice lowering. " I was close with him, even after the first game. But you already know that."

I nod.

" Ayanokoji-kun....had many scars scattered around his body." She says.

My eyes widened in surprise to that. I began to try and think of many different scenarios unto how those scars came to be, but I stayed silent and waited to see if Kikyo was going to continue.

And that, she did.

" He told me that he lived in a ' not-so-friendly home'. So those scars must have come from abuse, or something worse but I don't even want to think too deeply into that. But the point I'm trying to make here is that...." She sighs. " Maybe what happened in his past influenced greatly unto what he's become in the present. Maybe this school activated a survival instinct of sorts because it reminds him of that horrible environment."

A survival instinct....that does sound plausible. And it can explain his mistrust for others, and even to his classmates. But that couldn't possibly explain everything about him...

" Maybe he went to this school in the hopes to escape that place he couldn't call home. But this school just ended up being another hell he has to adapt to.....of course, I'm just speaking from my own opinion...." She hums, " But I wonder if something even more traumatizing happened during his time in London that caused a complete personality switch. He's a mystery."

I looked down to my hands as I let her words sink deeper. Is Ayanokoji-kun putting on this unnatural facade in order to hide his pain?

" That certainly does sound like an empathetic reason for some of his actions. But I don't think it's a sufficient enough explanation for all his other acts." I told her my honest thoughts.

" But..." I blinked slowly. " I'll keep that in mind." I can't fully disregard Kikyo's words. If I really feel like wanting to dissect the person that is Ayanokoji Kiyotaka...I'd need to take in all the factors I can get.

After all, if he really is a victim of abuse.

What kind of ' victim' would smile the way he did when he put Sudo through a beatdown?

Just remembering that scene sent chills down my spine....

Ryuen PoV (It kinda switched to Third Person PoV mid-way tho, I'm too lazy to change it lmao.)

" Are you sure we can rely on her?" Ibuki asks, sounding very doubtful.

I placed my drink on the table and looked at her. " Doubting me again, I see." I laughed. It's not like I could blame her for doing so.

" That's not what I mean." Ibuki glares before pointing towards the silver haired girl sitting across the room, reading her book without giving a damn about her surroundings.

" You hear that Shiina?" I chuckled. " My subordinate still seems to doubt your abilities. Why don't you try and prove her wrong?" I provoked.

Without breaking her gaze away from her stupid book, she spoke.

" Nothing can be proven at the moment," She softly says, turning a page of her book. " But when the time is right, I'll be sure to achieve victory for our class." She assured us this, but she couldn't even bother looking at either of us in the eye.

And it doesn't seem like Ibuki took kindly to that.

She strutted towards Hiyori and stood in front of her, and looked down on her with anger.

" Why don't you drop that book for one second and then look me in the eye, huh? It's bitchy for you to act like this when you've done nothing to deserve such privilege. I don't know what Ryuen sees in you, and that's why I want to see it for myself." she snapped at her.

Hiyori sighs and slowly closes her book. I smirked.

Her purple eyes met with Ibuki's.

" Ibuki-san, who do you think the antagonist is in this story?" The silver haired girl asks.

" What? What the hell do you mean by that." Ibuki scrunches her brows in confusion.

" I'm asking you this; Who do you think is the big bad at this point in time?" Hiyori repeats in a more simple form.

" That annoying girl, Ichinose. That is, if you erase the director from the equation of course." Ibuki answers.

" Indeed, that is the case. Ichinose-san suits the big bad antagonist at this point in time." Hiyori nods, agreeing.

" Ugh!" Ibuki's hands comb through her short hair in frustration. " THEN WHAT WAS THE POINT OF ASKING-"

So impatient, Ibuki. Kukuku.

" Do you think Ichinose is the one we should fear the most?" Hiyori cuts in.

" She flipped the entire rankings of our classes." Ibuki crosses her arms, " As far as I'm concerned, she's the common enemy here. Everyone wants to

destroy her."

Hiyori nods. " Indeed, that is true."

" *But...* "

" Unfortunately, Ichinose-san is not the enemy we should fear the most. It's not the director either."

" Huh?" Ibuki wondered what the girl meant by that, while Ryuen casually drinks in the background.

" The ones we should really fear.....are the other classes." She says.

" Huh???" Ibuki was now even more bewildered than before.

" Ibuki-san, let me put it as plan as I could; *Even though we may share the same common enemy. That alone, does not ensure that we are allies.*" Hiyori clarifies.

Hiyori opens her book and flips to the page that she bookmarked.

" It's happened in many stories of the past. Once the common adversary is taken out of the equation....then the victors will fight for the remaining power. Betrayals will happen, alliances will be shattered. People often mistake the line between ally and foe, it's much closer than you could imagine. Anyone can cross to that other side and become the new enemy."

"...."

" Kuku, do you get it now, Ibuki?" Ryuen says as he pops in the conversation, slinging his arm around Ibuki's shoulder with a grin. " This is why we need her. I'm someone who acts on impulse and due to that, I got my ass handed to me during the previous games."

" We need someone who exhibits absolute patience and precision because that's exactly what we lacked; And that's exactly what Shiina Hiyori possesses." Ryuen looks towards Hiyori. " Isn't that right, Shiina?"

" Whatever." Hiyori blankly says before turning another page. " As long as you stop bothering my reading time, I'll help with whatever I can."

" Kukuku, this is gonna be fun."

Kamuro PoV

" Where's Sakaya-hime?" Hashimoto asks me, scratching his head and looking around for the petite class leader.

" Likely at her room." I answered with disinterest.

He nods and let's out a small ' ah' before looking towards my foot.

" How's the-"

" Don't even ask. It hurts like hell."

" Thought so..." Hashimoto chuckles. The blonde saunters to the seat opposite of my table and points to it as if asking for permission.

I just sighed and turned my head away. Whether he takes the seat or doesn't, I don't really care. He can do whatever he wants.

I hear the chair screech after a few seconds. It seems he chose the former of the two.

" Man.....starting from the top, and now look where we are! The very bottom. It's almost comedic, really." Hashimoto jokes.

I grimaced at that.

" It is awfully comedic." I muttered. But it's much closer to tragic.

Again, he chuckles to himself. His attitude always irked me more often than not, boys like him, I can never get along with. But I have to since we all work under the same girl.

" Sakaya-hime has been pretty.....docile since the events of the second game, huh." Hashimoto starts a topic, " Who knew that Sakaya-hime was doing something behind our backs like this-- well, putting aside that one person who DID know about it and kept it secret as well." He eyes me playfully.

" How did you know?" I asked, curiously. I don't recall Sakayanagi explaining the complete details, especially the mention of my involvement.

" You're the person closest to her, you're basically her right-hand woman. That's also why I completely believed that you were also the traitor." Also given the fact that once the truth was revealed, Sakaya-hime came at you first with burning rage. So that served as more evidence to suggest that you knew the entire time." He added.

" Tch." I roll my eyes, " I often forget how sharp you actually are, Hashimoto. If only you were not so annoying, then you'd be a valuable member."

" Heh!" He spins, acting cool. " I'm already quite valuable to Sakaya-hime, thank you very much!" He responds coolly.

" But...jokes aside." He sighs, " We'd better start breaking Sakaya-hime out of this slump."

" Katsuragi isn't capable of leading this class. He's too defensive and his bald head can't think of the offensive very well. He's not like Sakaya-hime." He says, completely nonchalant that he'd just insult Katsuragi's head.

" It pains me to agree with you, but there's not a reason for me not to." I nodded. " He'll only crush what little morale we have left, and what's worse is that between him and Sakayanagi. The majority of our classmates will side with Katsuragi since they must've been left with a bitter taste in their mouths after Sakayanagi's deception." I said.

" Our class is pathetic." Hashimoto yawns, " Honestly, I'd rather switch to Ichinose's class so I can relax during these games. Even if she murdered 10 people, as long as I kiss up to her ego, then she'll keep me safe." He says, half-joking.

" If you really want to, then you may, Hashimoto-kun."

Hashimoto's eyes nearly popped out of his eye sockets as soon as he heard that familiar voice, I think he even stopped breathing for a second before quickly turning to see Sakayanagi approaching us.

So the 'princess' is finally done with her beauty sleep?

"S-Sakaya-hime! I didn't mean what I said just now! It was a joke." Hashimoto nudges my arm, " C'mon tell her Kamuro! Tell her it was a joke!" His voice pleaded.

" It's not a joke." I said, as I began somehow seeing Hashimoto's soul floating out of his body. An amusing sight, but I focused my gaze on Sakayanagi.

" Anyway, are you done sulking in your room? What do you think of this island egg hunt thing?" I asked.

" We've yet to arrive at the island itself, so I can't say much about how it'll go. But....I have decided on one thing for now." She says.

" Oh? So what did Sakaya-hime come up with?" Hashimoto's interest is clear.

" I'm going to let my dear Masumi-san lead the class for the third game."

Horikita PoV

Before stepping off from the ship, we were required to change into our PE uniform in order to avoid unnecessary inconvenience during the game. Each respective class went down the ship one by one and gathered neatly upon the beach. Almost everyone began

looking intimidated at the dense forest that lied ahead.

" Are we seriously going to stay here for a week?"

" Will anyone be able to find even one master egg in this dense forest...?"

" Shit, I might even forget where I hid the egg."

" Nah bro, I'm gonna get lost in there."

Hushed whispers started among the students, they all expressed several concerns in regards to the safety of this game. But the ones who didn't complain, were well-aware that safety didn't matter here.

" **Hello my dear students!!!**" A megaphone screeched loudly, causing everyone's ears to rupture.

Ugh. She did that on purpose.

We all turned our heads to her, and I was suprised to see that she wasn't wearing her usual attire. Instead, she wore a sundress with the top half being coloured black while the bottom half was a pretty white littered with golden flower designs. Lastly, she wore a hat that granted her a sufficient amount of shade from the sun.

Holding the megaphone, she loudly announces.

" **All right! Now that we're all here, I'll finally do a quick review of the game's rules. You are provided 2 hours to hide**

the eggs as best you can, and once the two hours are up you are required to convene here at the beach once more for further announcement before the game begins. And once the game begins, then you shall start egg hunting! Remember, to not violate the rules listed in the pamphlet for the game. And also be sure to remember the difference of value between the normal eggs and the master eggs. Speaking of which, here are the appearances of the eggs."

She beckons one of the teachers to hold up two eggs for everyone to see. They were both colored beautifully just like a normal easter egg, however, the difference was obvious between them. While the normal egg looked like a normal easter egg, the master egg had a huge letter ' M' engraved on its center.

" A normal egg is equal to 1,000 private points for the person that finds it. The Master Egg is equal to 400 class points for that person's class. And I made it reeealllly easy for you guys to differentiate the two since I felt nice :> "

After that brief summary, the teachers began handing out the easter eggs. I quickly searched for the person who possessed the master egg for our class-

" I have the master egg." And of course, it was in Ayanokoji's hands.

I nodded and signaled for our classmates to huddle closer.

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" ALRIGHT! YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN 2 HOURS TO HIDE THOSE EGGS! GO GO GO ! HIDE THOSE EGGS!"

As soon as we were given the green signal, all the classes immediately went to forest through different entrances.

" Don't forget to come back here once the two hours are up~!"

" Man this forest is huge-- Ah shit, almost tripped-" Sudo says, managing to save himself from tripping over a root.

" We're supposed to be here for a week....oh god does this forest have mosquitoes?!" Karuizawa shrieks at the thought of having to fight mosquitoes.

" That's going to be likely...hahah..." Kikyo nervously chuckles.

" Noooo please noooo!" Karuizawa begins sulking while Kikyo pats her back.

" The terrain isn't smooth at all either. It's more rocky." Hirata comments. And he was right, there were a lot of rocks around that can be climbed over to reach the top, not only that but we passed by a lot of cliffs.

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We've ventured around for the first hour and eventually settled onto a good area.

" All right, everyone. Search for a spot within this area and hide your eggs. If you want to go outside the area then feel free to do so, just remember where you hid your eggs in case we need to adjust

the spots." Ayanokoji gives instructions, to which everyone proceeds to follow.

While everyone proceeded to look for hiding spots. I stayed behind in order to discuss with Ayanokoji.

" Ayanokoji-kun, what's your plan to hide the master egg?"

" I don't have a plan yet." He says, walking over to a tree trunk and knocking on it.

" There's a wide array of spots to hide the egg, and we still have the extra hour to hide it extremely well--"

" Don't you think that'd be a waste of the extra hour, Horikita?" He interrupts.

""

" I don't plan to hide the egg just yet. I want to explore this environment as much as I can before deciding on where to hide the master egg." He says, looking towards the distance.

" You're right, that does sound like a better use of time. Will go off on your own then?" I asked. I secretly hoped that he'd require company, so I can take a peek into how his mind works when it comes to plan formation.

If I can't understand him, then maybe I should try learning from him.

" Yeah. I want you to stand by and keep track of the class." He says, placing the egg back into his pocket.

" You can count on me then." I assured him.

" I know. Take care. I'll be sure to come back before the final hour is up. " He says, already taking footsteps towards the path.

" Yeah...good luck to you." I said before walking away to search for a hiding spot for my egg.

Third Person PoV

Ayanokoji stood on the edge of a cliff, surveying what's below. The drop was big and at the end of the drop were more trees.....

If someone were to fall from this height, then they'd likely die or end up severely injured. Best case scenario: the trees will save them from immediate death.

Worst case? Well the worst case scenario is already obvious.

Ayanokoji stares at the scenery for a few more seconds before taking off and leaving the area...

All the classes assembled back at the beach just as Lumine had instructed.

But for Class C their leader, Ayanokoji, was missing.

Worry began to spread within the Class C students, wondering where their leader had gone to.

" Suzune-chan, do you know where he might've gone...? " Kushida asks her friend.

The black-haired girl pursed her lips and shakes her head. " No, I don't. He told me he wanted to explore the island as much as he could before the two hour mark. He said he'd return before time is up but..."

" Huh?" Sudo came into the conversation. " He went off by himself?"

Suzune answers with a nod.

"Do you think the mosquitoes might've gotten him...?" Karuizawa muttered.

" What if...he got hurt along the way?" Matsushita says, " He might be stuck somewhere...or maybe lost."

" Ayanokoji-kun isn't the type of person to get lost. Especially in an environment like this, he'd be on high-alert of his surroundings at all times." Suzune quickly cut in before they panic with worst case scenarios.

" Are you really that confident, though? Ayanokoji-kun isn't superhuman.....it's possible that he did get lost." Karuizawa remarks.

" Trust me, Karuizawa-san. I'm sure he's on his way here. Rather than getting lost, that idiot must've gotten distracted by something along the way." I sighed.

" And you guessed right, Horikita."

" AH! WHAT THE HELL? WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?!"
Karuizawa jumps and shrieks in surprise.

Everyone noticed him and wanted to ask questions but they were cut off when that familiar megaphone turned on again.

" Okay! It seems like everyone is here--or not? Well I don't care! Let's just move on quickly with final announcements so the game can finally begin."

Everyone on the island stops chatting with one another and proceeded to listen carefully to what Lumine had to say.

" This game will last for the entire week--unless a class has reached the win conditions and end the game early! For the rest of week, you will stay on this island searching for the eggs. When a class is ready to submit their master eggs, please meet me on the beach and submit it to me then. And I'm not sure if you've noticed but there IS wildlife around the island, and that will be your food source! You guys will search for basic human needs yourselves! Like true survivalists!"

" Wait wha--"

" Annnnd with that, I have one more thing to introduce before the game begins." She gestures for the teachers to fetch the items.

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The students stared at the four different supplies presented to them.

Supply for food and water

Shelter

Hunting materials (bow and arrows, machetes, nets, etc.)

And....

" An inflatable bed...? What the hell is an inflatable bed doing there." Someone muttered.

Yes. The fourth item was a lone inflatable bed large in size.

" What's a completely useless item doing there..." Another expressed their bewildered feelings.

Everyone was quite confused as to why that bed was there.

Lumine clears her throat and activates the megaphone again.

" Each class can select one item from these 4 supplies to take with you on the island! Food and water, Shelter such as tents, hunting materials--and an inflatable bed!"

Everyone seemed unimpressed at the last item.

" Anyways, discuss with your classmates and make your selection."

After that, everyone turned to each other and began discussing about which item has more advantage, weighing each pros and cons. The food and water supply may be the most enticing option, but it could run out quickly or spoil. Lumine never specified what was inside the food supply anyways, so it might be a cruel prank if they were to pick it.

The shelter option was the next best pick, classes wouldn't have to scour the island for good shelter if they already have tents to set up camp faster. And besides, no mosquitoes! Karuizawa was currently campaigning the decision to pick the tents for her classmates

As for the hunting materials, a few students are eager to pick it since some DO have hunting experience. It could be fun for them. And it could serve as a better food source for the long run by actively hunting for fish and wild animals they could find.

Unfortunately, nobody seemed to be talking about the inflatable bed. It's been deemed an outcast from amongst the discussions--

" My class will take the bed." A lone hand raises into the air.

" What?" Everyone collectively muttered in confusion, except for the lone psycho that wanted the bed.

All the classes abruptly stopped at their discussions and searched for the person that talked about taking the bed. They wondered which class was crazy enough to even want the bed--

" All right then! The inflatable bed goes to Class C, as requested by their leader Ayanokoji Kiyotaka!" Lumine happily announces.

Everyone in Class C turned to Ayanokoji with utter disbelief....

" THE BED?!?!?!?"

CHAPTER END!

All right! the third game finally begins.

I don't have much to say except that i'm very excited to write the third game arc. I feel energized for this arc.

Sooo you can expect the next chapter to come within two days!

You're free to theorize how the third game will go if you wish to. Just don't expect an answer from me :D

KawaiiWolfmine, AWOOOOO!!!

Yes. I am wolf.

S3. Episode 2: The inflatable bed.

Kikyo PoV

[Day 1 - 10 am]

" Ayanokoji-kun." Suzune called.

" Hm?" Ayanokoji hums in response while walking, the inflatable bed carefully strapped on his back.

" Why did you choose the bed." She asks.

I wonder too....

" Everyone, up ahead is a bit slippery due to the mud so be careful. Be sure not to accidentally fall down a slope. Don't worry, we'll arrive to the camp I marked shortly." Ayanokoji-kun loudly announces.

" Hey. Why are you ignoring me." Suzune grimaces.

" Ugh, it's so humid." Karuizawa-san says, using her hand in an attempt to fan herself.

" Don't worry, Karuizawa. We'll take a short break as soon as we arrive." Ayanokoji assures, slightly adjusting the strapped inflatable bed on his back.

" You're ignoring me, aren't you, Ayanokoji-kun?" Suzune-chan says, annoyed. She began poking his arm.

" Why." poke, " Did." poke two times, " You." poke trice, " Pick." poke fries-- i mean four times, " The-" five times, " BED." and she keeps poking him after that, while he completely ignores her...

I sigh to myself, shaking my head at these two. Their friendship looks so normal from an outside perspective, when in reality, their... 'friendship' is more complex. Or maybe there was never any friendship there at all. Either way, I know full-well that neither of them will ever get along as normal friends in the inside.

But I do hope.....that once this long storm passes. Everyone could just get along and we could spend our free time in bliss, making memories with people we cherish. Even if we're in this horrible environment, even if we're trapped under a crazy director's rule. It doesn't mean that we can't make the best out of it, there's still time, and there's still opportunities to make that happen.

I tuned out Suzune-chan's incessant remarks against Ayanokoji-kun, and just paid heed to my surroundings. Even though it was humid and hot, the scenery we passed by a while ago was magnificent and truly a breath of fresh air. It's been months since any of us had stepped outside from school....well, Ayanokoji-kun was lucky to have gotten a headstart when he was sent to London.

Kamuro PoV

Ugh, I can't believe that girl...

How dare she give me the leader role? For most of my life, I've always been a follower. I never developed any qualities befitting a

leader, not a single one. And her reasoning as to why I should be the leader.....

" The class trusts neither me nor Katsuragi. Even if Masumi-san is an associate of mine, it's very clear that she's always been reluctant when it came to taking my side. Thus, if Masumi-san were to take leadership, it'd be seen as an act of rebel.

She really left out the part where she stomped her cane on my foot, huh. You know, thinking about it now, that WOULD be a good enough reason for me to ' rebel'. If I possessed the necessary qualities for a leader, then I would've done this out of my own volition. Fortunately or unfortunately, I don't possess such traits.....

" We'll be depending on you, Kamuro~" Hashimoto grinned, using his palm to hide his laughter but everyone in our class could hear it. I want to kill this man.

But as if sensing my murderous intent, he slyly starts distancing himself from me with that stupid shit-eating grin. Better than nothing, I guess. Having his presence near me for even a second more will really push me to my limits.

" How is being leader, Masumi-san?" I hear a smug voice on my other side. I reluctantly turn my head to lock gazes with that loli.

She was currently riding on Kito's back as a means of transportation. It looked stupid and nobody would've taken her seriously if nobody was aware of her loose screws.

" Terrible. Please demote me back to follower." I grumbled.

I made sure that my voice was only audible to Sakayanagi. The class was following behind me, and despite the fact that speaking a bit louder over this distance will remain inadudible to them. I didn't want to risk it. I have to act cold to Sakayanagi and rebellious.....which is very identical to my usual attitude towards her.

" Fufu~ I wish I could, but you already know why that's not possible for now."

For now.

" Ah, but don't fret, Masumi-san. I'll be your loyal advisor remember? You won't lead the class alone." She reassures.

" That sounds very reassuring, coming from someone that's taken nothing but losses for 2 games and a midterms exam." I smirked. " Perhaps third time's a charm, right, Sakayanagi?" I glance to her and as expected, she gave me an ice cold glare.

Ha. What you get, bitch. I'm never going to let you live it down.

" I highly recommend that you watch your mouth, Masumi-san." she says, averting her eyes. " I won't lose again. It's a horrible feeling." Her eyes drifted off ahead. " I hate it." She says.

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I sighed.

" Yeah, it sucks." I concurred.

But she still looked ridiculous getting a piggyback ride from Kito.

Ryuen PoV

I distributed each female and male into 4 groups as evenly as I could. For the entire day, they are to go around the forest and search for master eggs, and if they get lost then that's their issue. Knowing that I wouldn't go out and find them if they do end up lost, then the chances of them actually getting lost will decrease because then they'll use their memory to its full potential. I obviously excluded Kaneda since his memory is terrible, tch.

That's the only useful information Ayanokoji gave me about my own CLASSMATE.

As for the leftover people, I had them go out and search for food and such. Even though I picked the **food and water supplies** for my class, it's best to gather more supplies in case we run out too quick. Just for emergencies.

As for our master egg.....well....

I glance towards the silver haired girl, reading her book peacefully while sitting atop a log.

The master egg was given to her, and she hid it around this area once we had set up camp and formed different teams. She has not once discussed about where she hid the egg, vague answers was all she had to give. Ibuki complained about it immediately and she was a pain in the ass to convince that this was all according to plan.

When in reality, even I don't know where Hiyori hid the egg.

The girl is a mystery, her stoic expression has yet to cease. Back when I first started dictating the class and placing myself as leader, she was indifferent to it all. She sat on the last column, the end of the row, always reading that book of hers and only speaking up when talked to. Her eyes never shine in conversation, but when it comes to books you could see just that tiny shimmer of light. But how does this equate to me needing a partner?

Heh.

I've always done things alone and forced others to follow my will. I never felt the need to go through the experience of 'working' together with someone I deem equal in terms of leadership. Either the worms go my way or no way, that's how it's always been. But I can't continue leading things in that way here, not anymore.

I glanced to my right foot, where it had been shot by the director during the second game.

I've gotten it treated but it's still sore. Tch, that woman is going to pay

for revealing my personal business to those cunts and then shooting my foot.

I walked towards Hiyori, who was as calm as ever, reading her book without another care in the world.

" I'm suprised your book wasn't confiscated." I started a conversation. However, it seems my words didn't reach her judging by the way her eyes read the text unbothered and then flipping to another page.

I have to tolerate this for the sake of victory, huh?

" Oi." I knocked on her head.

" Ow." She pauses, slowly looking up to me in realization. " Oh....did Ryuen-kun say something? Apologies, I was engrossed in this book. " She says.

I sat on the same log as her, but made sure there was distance.

" I talking about how it was a suprise to see that the director didn't confiscate your book." I mused.

" Tell me, what point is there for her to confiscate my book?" She questioned.

" To make you suffer? It sounds like something she'd do." I scoffed.

" Hm, that's valid. I suppose luck was on my side for now." She nods.

....

" You know," I rested my arms on the sturdy log while leaning back on my seat just a bit, " Your plan for this game. It's something I would never dream of thinking about, not because it's too elaborate, rather it's because it does nothing for us." I said.

" But you do know it's necessary, yes? I mean, why come to me of all people for assistance otherwise." She says, turning another page as she continued to speak calmly--almost emotionlessly, " If this school didn't host different types of monsters, and if this school didn't bet on the lives of its students. Then perhaps you would've thrived here without needing my assistance, lead like you always have."

" You're right about that." I chuckled. " I would've been king of this school hadn't it been for those circumstances."

" King? I wouldn't go that far. You'd thrive here that's for certain. But to say that you'd become king? That's unlikely." She clicks her tongue, " You'll still struggle to reach the top."

" But I wouldn't need your help then, right?" I glance to her and her lips remained a thin line, I couldn't tell whether she was thinking of an answer, or if she was just distracted by her damned book again.

" Hm....that, I do not know." Huh. she actually answered me. " While I did say in my previous statement that you'd perhaps wouldn't be needing my help if things were different. I don't actually know how a timeline such as that would go."

I roll my eyes at her.

" Anyways, are we really just going to sit here while everyone brawls for the master eggs?" I asked, even though I knew my

answer.

" That's the plan for now. There are far more important things to gain than a simple victory from this game." She says, calmly.

Kanzaki PoV

I was part of the group tasked to find the master egg or any normal eggs along the way. After we finished setting up camp and setting up the tents we got from picking the **sheltering supplies**.

As I walked a bit behind from the group, I began to think to myself. I wondered how this game will go, because so far Ichinose doesn't seem to have a plan yet. Speaking of which....that *bizarre* selection from that Ayanokoji....

What in the world does he plan to do with an inflatable bed?

That man has taken subtle actions that leave quite an impact. His recent stunt being the midterm exam, while not entirely sure that he was behind it. I'm still inclined to believe that he was indeed the perpetrator of that trick, judging by the subtle change of expression from Ichinose. She was caught off-guard, and there is only one student that could pull that off. None other than the leader of the newly promoted Class C.

His behaviour recently...has changed as well. I managed to see him a few times ever since his return and he's....smiling more often.

What could've happened for that to be?

It's honestly unsettling to see a smile grace his previously apathetic expression. I wonder if it's genuine, or if it's nothing but a facade similar to Ichinose. But with the current circumstances happening regarding him, it's the latter. He's scheming something and hiding it behind a smile, but what could it be? How does he plan to win this game.

And how does he plan to win it with an inflatable bed...?

" W-Wait, Kanzaki, watch out-!"

" Huh?" Why were they-

Before I could even finish my sentence, I suddenly lost the feel of the ground and I was sent falling downwards before I could even process it.

Thud!

" Kanzaki!" Their voices call out to me

Suzune PoV

[5 pm]

" Damn....it's already turning dark." Miyamoto mutters.

" We didn't even get to do anything except hiding the eggs."

Hondo says.

The rest of the boys nodded. Although, some were actually sent out to scour for food, they came back with fruits. Besides that, nobody else moved from camp. Why does Ayanokoji-kun want our class to stand by idly while the rest of the classes are probably searching for the eggs? We shouldn't waste time, but no matter how hard I tried to convince him during the day, he was insistent on having us 'relax' here for the day. However, it was only Ayanokoji-kun himself who sought out beyond this area in search for the eggs which only increases my concerns. Does he intend to do this by himself?

" So bored....Miyatcchi massage me, will you?" Hasebe says.

" Massage yourself." Miyake rolls his eyes as he said that, " Let me relax in peace, woman."

" Uggghhhh..." Hasebe groans.

"There are certainly more productive ways to have spent the day..." I hear Yukimura mutter to himself.

" It's turning night....the mosquitoes will come." I sighed at Karuizawa's ramblings.

" Kei-chan, seriously, have you ever talked to the therapist about this?" Matsushita follows up with a question.

" The mosquitoes ate the therapist." Karuizawa flatly says.

" Haha....that's....not believable in the slightest bit, Karuizawa-san." Kikyo says, amused and sounding a bit worried for her well-being.

Everyone simply gathered around the camp fire in silence. Meanwhile, Ayanokoji was apart from us with.....his stupid inflatable bed.

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[6:30 pm]

" All right, I give up. Do you guys wanna play a game?" A voice broke the silence.

Everyone turns to its source, and suprisingly it ended up being Mori-san.

She rubs her arm shyly. " I hate silence like this. We did nothing the whole day and....I'm bored and uncomfortable, so can't we just play a game to pass the time? It doesn't look like any of us are willing to sleep it off anyways..." She suggested.

" A game?" Hasebe immediately props up, excitement visible in her eyes." I'm down!" She says, raising her hand before turning to Miyake and raising his hand.

" Wha-? Hey!"

" Miyatchii will join too!"She says.

" Haruka....." Miyake didn't look the least bit amused.

" A game? It sounds like a wonderful idea. I'll join in." Hirata, sensing the opportunity for everyone to get along a bit better, quickly joined.

If Hirata's joining in then so will his fangirls.

And also....Kikyo-

" Sure!" The woman herself perked up, " A game sounds fun. Let's do it!" She encourages.

Thought so.

And just like that, both girls and boys slowly began joining as well. Not wanting to be left out of the crowd.

" But what game?" Hasebe asks.

Mori chuckles nervously, " Um...well, I didn't think you guys would say yes. So I didn't really..." She trails off.

So she didn't even have a game in mind.....

" Anything but truth or dare, please. It's repetitive in situations like this." Keisei voices out.

" Ah, that's what I was thinking too!" Hasebe nods.

" Anyone else got ideas for campfire games then?" Hirata asks.

" Um....maybe ' Once upon a time' ? If you guys heard of it..." Mii-chan suggests.

" Oh. Isn't that the game where the players create a story together by taking turns in adding a word or something?" Sudo asks.

Mii-chan nods. " Y-Yes!"

" Sounds fun. I don't know about you guys, but I'm willing to play that." Onodera says.

" Same here! It's been a while since I heard of that game." Kikyo jumps in. I'm instantly reminded of the times where we played that exact game together during field trips. As if sensing my reminiscing, she glances to me and smiles.

Oh no, I don't want to join this....

" Cool! I'll start then." Hasebe takes initiative without waiting for the rest's approval. However it doesn't seem like anyone has objections to this.

" Once." Hasebe starts, immediately nudging Miyake, to which the latter sighs.

" Upon." he says.

And now it was Mori's turn.

" A." Amazing, Mori.

" Time." Mii-chan continues.

" There." Hirata says.

" Was." Maezono says right after.

" A." Matsushita follows up.

" Mosquito." Karuizawa.....

BONK!

" WHAT IS UP WITH YOU AND MOSQUITOES?!" Matsushita finally breaks.

" OW! THAT HURT! AND FOR YOUR INFORMATION, I HAD A VERY TRAUMATIZING EXPERIE-"

" OH QUIT IT WITH YOUR PATHETIC SOB STORIES, KEI-CHAN!"

" HOW DARE YOU-

The two began to bicker loudly, much to everyone's amusement. Kikyo just chuckles, shaking her head at the two.

" Let's just continue and leave them be." Onodera says before continuing the circle, " That."

"Went." Okitani says.

" To." Ishikura follows.

" Karuizawa's. " Sudo says.

" Huh? " Karuizawa pauses her bicker with Matsushita and turns to Sudo, looking confused. " Why did you-"

" Hair." Kikyo smiles.

" MY HAIR?!" Karuizawa freaks out and begins running her fingers through her hair.

" RELAX, WILL YOU?!" Matsushita says in disbelief.

Everyone chuckles at that. Who knew that the stubborn gyaru would be so afraid of mosquitoes....it isn't like it's unwarranted but she's overreacting quite a bit.

" You're next, Suzune-chan." Kikyo says.

I turn to her and then to everyone else.

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I sighed.

" Sorry, I'm not in the mood." I spoke my feelings before getting up. " You may continue without me, if I feel like it, then I might join the next game if you guys are up for it." I said.

Kikyo frowns but nods nonetheless, and everyone else seems to be satisfied with my excuse. And soon, the game resumed with Hondo's turn, I think he also said something about hair but I'm not that curious to know.

My curiosity actually lies in someone else.

" Care to tell me the plan regarding this bed, now?" I said, walking up to the side of his inflatable bed. The one he's currently laying on.

" Hm? My plans regarding the bed?" He repeats, feigning confusion.

" Yes. What in the world do you have in mind for this bed? What's the purpose in picking it?" I ask, losing patience.

"...Purpose?" He repeats again before glancing to me. " Do you really need to ask that?"

" Hm?" I noticed he looked a bit serious now. " Yes? I really don't get it." I said.

" I pity you, Horikita. I didn't think you'd actually be confused about my reasoning in picking the bed." He says, sighing.

Pity???

" Very well, I suppose I will do the honors of showing you." He says, getting off the bed.

" Lie down." he says.

"....Okay?" I said, confused, but lied down nonetheless. It was comfortable.

" Does it feel nice?" He asks.

" It does." I said.

" That's the purpose of a bed, Horikita. It serves as a means to rest in comfort-"

SWISH!

He dodges my swing.

" What in the world did you do that fo--"

" WAS THAT SERIOUSLY YOUR REASONING?!"

"....Yes? What else is a bed supposed to be used for?"

" Oh my god..." I facepalmed. I'm not sure if he's being serious or joking. Only the heavens know what is going on through this boy's mind.

" First you picked this useless bed, and then you wandered off earlier and made us think you were lost, and now, you told us to do nothing for the day-"

" ' Do nothing' ? When did I ever say that. I only recall ordering you all to *stay* here." He interrupts.

I raised a brow. " What's the difference."

He sighs, his lips turning to a smile, as if amused by my question.

" Staying here and doing nothing are two different things, Horikita." He says.

" Even if it is, I don't care. What I really want to know about besides the bed, *is the reason why you told us to stay here.*" I ignored his useless remark and went straight to the point.

" Is everyone getting along?" He asks.

"..." I glanced to the students surrounding the camp fire. Their laughs were audible as their little story became more crazier each turn.

" Wow, they really look they're having fun. Perhaps we oughta join in-"

" You just wanted them to get along from the start of the game, didn't you." I said. He turns to me.

" Yep." He said, popping the ' p'.

" I wanted them to break down their walls with each other. Learn to be relaxed and learn to trust each other, plant the seeds of friendship for them, I suppose." He says with a small smile as his eyes turned to them again. " Look. They're getting along without the need of a stressful situation to prompt them into working together They're just having fun around the campfire."

And he wanted it to be natural as possible. That's why he hid his intentions from everyone, including me, so as to make this situation happen and lead them to believe that it was their own choice. Which it was, it's just that Ayanokoji had once again made the blueprints beforehand.

" I see..." Well then, that leaves one other question. " But why did you go out and search for the eggs alone? You could've at least asked for my assistance. I know you intended for the class to get along, but the victory lies in finding the master eggs. Bonding time can come later."

" Horikita, there are far more important things to gain than a simple victory in a game like this."

" What if there'll never be a ' next time' for these bonding moments to occur? I deemed this as the best opportunity given our circumstances. I understand your concerns, you out of everyone else here, is focused on winning. Focused on the goal of this game. But

by doing so, you're missing all the different paths each choice could lead to, paths that could lead to a good place for us in the long run." He elaborates.

"..."

Ayanokoji....he's always like this. Analyzing everything around him and developing a clear mental image of *what is* and *what could be*. It's something I've yet to get a grasp on, I'm still used to operating on my own and I'm still restricted to my narrow-minded way of thinking but I try to slowly break free from it. So I can act as a good shadow leader when he needs me to be.

I want to learn his view....

" Besides, there's no need to worry. Look what I found, Horikita." He snaps me from my thoughts.

" Huh?"

He takes out something from his pocket and hands it to me. My eyes widened at the object, there was no mistake about it. The different coloring and the huge letter written on it...

" Ayanokoji-kun.....you found one of the master eggs...?"

CHAPTER END!

Ngl, lowkey shipping Kamuro and Hashimoto as I wrote this chapter.

Also Hiyori and Ryuen.

And the best ship, Sakayanagi x Kito :D

Just kidding!

Or not?

It'd be really tragic if any romantic relationships actually formed in this fic. Hahahahahahah.

See you in the next episode!

KawaiiLumine, out~